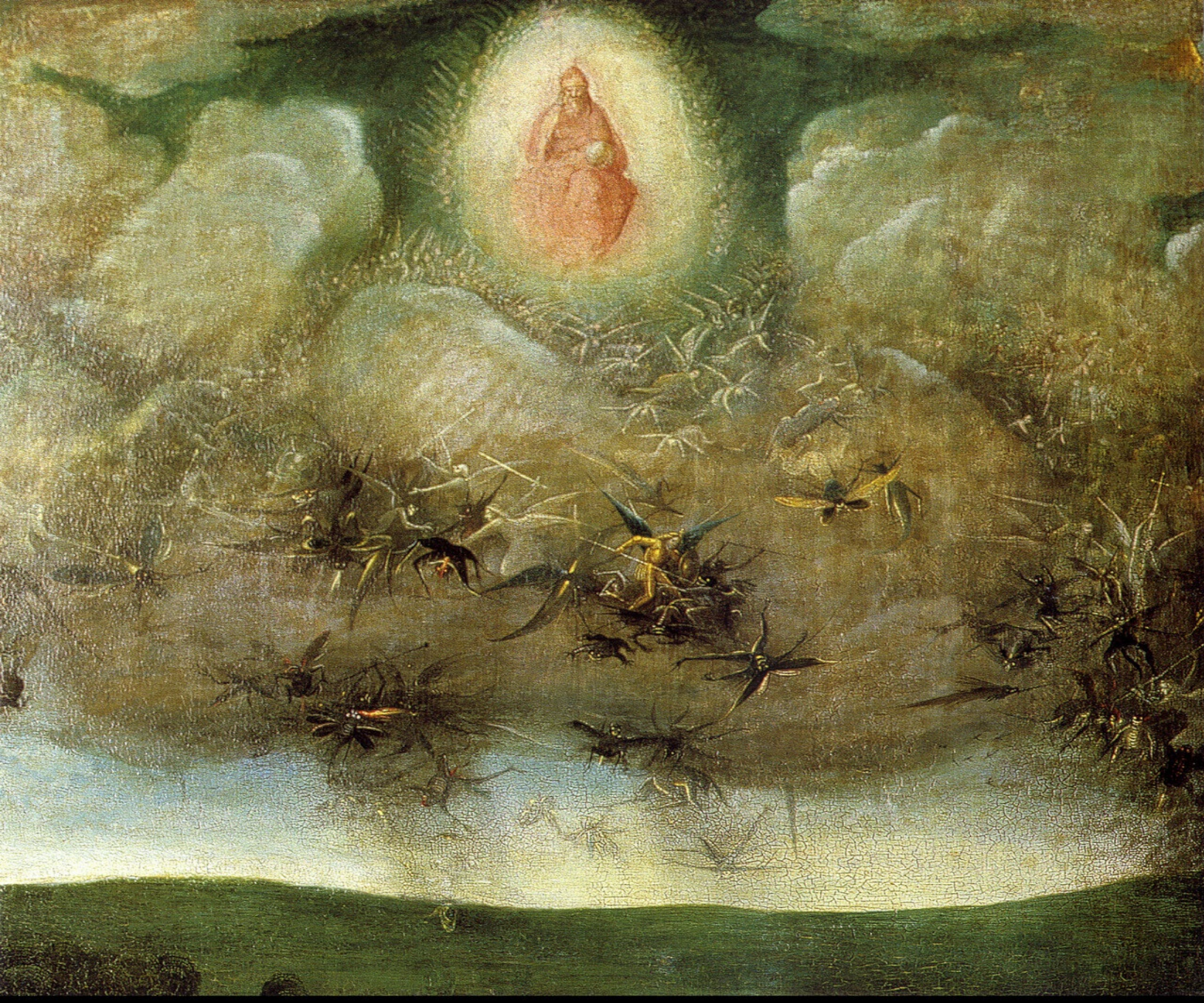
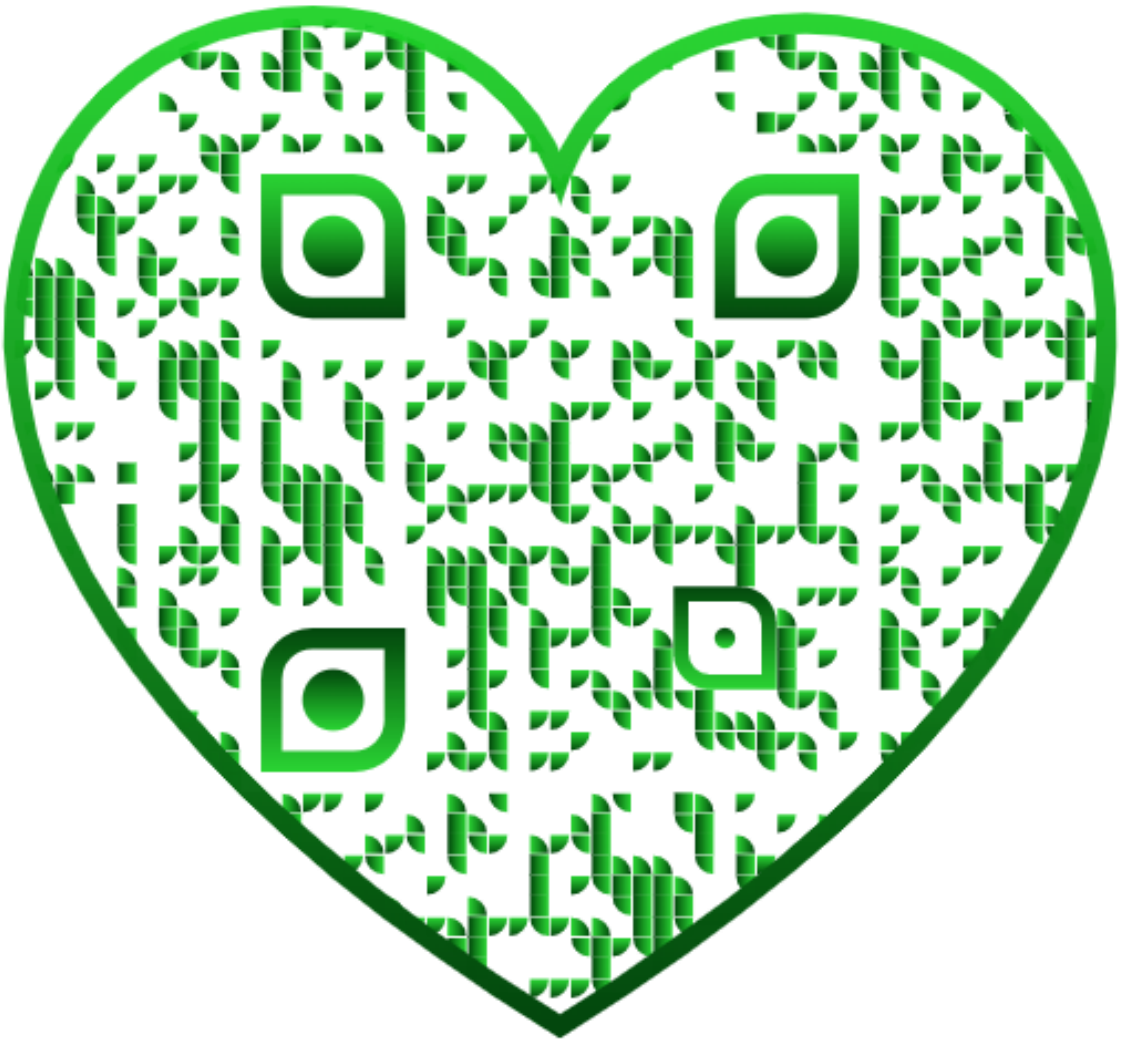


EVIL SPIRITS

and their influence on people

Sapientum8 Publishing



EVIL SPIRITS

and their influence on people

Be sober, be vigilant; because your
adversary the devil, as a roaring lion,
walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.
(1 Peter 5:8)

As bees are chased off by smoke,
and doves by stench, so does the sin
chases off the Angel, guardian of our life.
(St. Basil the Great, book V)

SAPIENTUM8 PUBLISHING

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

I – THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS

II – THE ORIGINS OF EVIL SPIRITS, THEIR SIN AND PUNISHMENT

III – THE DARK REALM OF EVIL SPIRITS

IV – INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE

V – THE ATTITUDE OF GOD TOWARD FALLEN SPIRITS

VI – THE WAYS THAT EVIL SPIRITS INFLUENCE PEOPLE

VII – HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF EVIL SPIRITS AND OF THEIR INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE

VIII – INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE AFTER THEIR DEATH

IX – ON EXTREME INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE

X – THE CONDITIONS, FAVORABLE TO INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE

XI – ON THE SPIRITUAL MEANS OF FIGHTING AGAINST EVIL SPIRITS

XII – THE QUALITIES REQUIRED FROM EXORCISTS

CONCLUSION

INTRODUCTION

In Prologue, on the 1st day of July, in the narrative of St. Nilus, the following is said: “A person’s soul is between an Angel and a demon. For the Angel puts in, and shows, and teaches whatever is good for virtue; the demon, however, puts in whatever is sinful. The soul has the authority to follow whichever one it desires, either the Angel, or the demon. For this reason, watch yourself lest you offend the Angel.”

The presence of the devil near us is confirmed by the following story: “St. Andrew, Fool-for-Christ, who once happened to be present at a marketplace in Constantinople, met a monk, who had a dreadful snake curled around his neck. This monk was a man of many virtues but, unfortunately, he was also money-loving and avaricious. Stepping off from him for about several steps, Andrew was surprised to see over his head, on air, an inscription: “the serpent of money-loving passion – the root of all iniquity.” But he was even more surprised when, turning back, he saw an Angel and a demon, arguing for the soul of the monk. The devil was trying to prove that the monk, as a money-lover and, therefore, an idolater, belongs to him, and the Angel, pointing out many virtues of the elder, argued that he was worthy of God’s mercy. A voice from the heavens said to the Angel: “You have no part in him, for only the merciful receive forgiveness from Me and inherit the heavenly abodes.” After this, the Angel immediately left the monk.”[1]

Thus, near each one of us, there is an evil spirit-tempter. If an evil man can cause us a lot of evil, incalculably more evil can be inflicted upon us by an evil spirit – and not just an evil spirit, but the “prince of this world.”[2]

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.“[3] What kind of an unequal battle is in front of us? We are carnal, and have to battle against spirits. This fight is like a fight that might happen between a blind man and someone who has eyesight. The latter strikes with his sword and pierces straight through the heart, and the former just swings the sword wildly and only strikes the air. Spirits are invisible to us; how are we supposed to direct against them our strikes? Spirits are immortal; what will we gain if we manage to smite them? They don’t eat, don’t drink, don’t sleep, and for us, who are fighting them, food and rest are essential. Evil spirits are on the

battlefield since the times of Adam, but we were only born recently, and will soon die; therefore, compared to them, we are fighters inept and unskilled, whereas they are extremely shrewd and very experienced since very long time.

Being in such a predicament, being constantly at war and under the fiery darts[4] of our most evil enemy – the devil, who, like a bird of prey, stalks his victims from on high, we need to know this enemy in details, so that we could withstand him, and protect ourselves from him on all sides. Without such knowledge, it is easy to remain in communion with the devil without even noticing it, as the devil can take an appearance of an angel of light.[5] This happened to many of those who didn't understand their pitiful state, as it was the case with Israelites, who called themselves sons of God, but Jesus Christ told them that they were children of the devil.[6]

Having learned about the enemy, we can go into the battle properly armed and, as with God everything is possible,[7] we can achieve full victory, for "those who are with us are more than those who are with them."[8]

Our victory is also greatly helped by the fact that in our struggle against spirits of evil we are aided by our elder brethren – the holy Angels, to whom God commands to protect us in all our ways.

In the life of St. Nephon there is an episode, when after a prayer, God showed him a large field, where there was a great multitude of demons, divided in regiments. And then, one of the black Ethiops,[9] as if preparing the regiments for the battle, was counting the soldiers and was saying: "Looking at me, don't fear anything, as my force will be with you." Some of the demons brought a lot of various weapons and were giving them out to the regiments. When St. Nephon was looking at this, there was a voice saying: "Nephon, turn to the East and see." And he, turning to the East, saw a clear field, in which there was a great multitude of men clothed in white robes, ready for the battle, and their numbers were twice as many as there were demons. Then came a certain man, who in appearance was brighter than the Sun, and said: "Thus commands the Lord Sabaoth, go into all the lands, helping Christians and protecting them."[10] Therefore, with all these helpers, our battle against those forces is quite secure; yet the holy Angels are only our helpers, but it is us who must wage the war.

While the rationalists reject the existence of the devil, among Christians there are also quite a few of those who as if forget about the existence of evil

spirits, not considering the devil to be the most dangerous enemy. In our book we'll try to prove, first and foremost, the existence of the devil and, based on God's word and works of ancient Christian saints and teachers of the Church, to uncover the forces and the cunningness of our terrible enemies, – in order to frighten the careless and those who neglect their salvation; and on the other hand, – to encourage all those who despair because of the realization of their powerlessness in the struggle with the dreadful invisible enemies, which fill the air.[11]

Thus, reader, direct your spiritual eyes into the dark realm of evil spirits, and learn from this book your enemies and the weapons necessary to defeat them. If the devil, who deserves all hate, were to reveal himself at once, then everyone would immediately chase him away. For this reason, he hides and covers himself, puts upon himself a cloak of truth and by these means injects deadly poison into his followers. Thus, with God's help, you can greatly benefit from this book, for it is not based on some personal opinions or conjectures, but on the evidence of God's word and ancient teachings of the early Church. Even if you already read in various places some information about evil spirits, read it again here, all in one place. And as for those who never read it, they should read it with even greater attention, lest they be entrapped by the devil and his minions and, after the Great Judgement of Jesus Christ, share with them the same fate.[12]

◆ ◆ ◆

I – THE EXISTENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS

When we want to study a certain subject of the visible world, we choose a convenient place, from which it could be better seen. It wouldn't be unreasonable for us to choose a proper mental place when we study our primeval enemies – spirits of evil. We will accurately find this place if we realize the nullity of our knowledge, even in regard to the subjects of this world. "Evil spirits," they say, "don't exist, because we don't see them with our physical eyes." But what *do* we see with our eyes? We only see a tiniest, minuscule part of the visible world. This is proved by telescope and microscope, and even our own sense of smell which, for example, is capable of sensing odors totally invisible to the eye. Consider the sharpest vision – it will not be able to help a person see the insides of the Earth without digging and, due to distortions, the person will see the closer subjects to be larger, and those which are remote – smaller, even though in reality they might be equal in size. Caloric[13] is also invisible, yet when it is chemically separated from water, it turns into ice – no-one can deny this.

If we cannot conclude about absence of certain things just by the fact that we cannot see them, then we cannot base our conclusion of non-existence of evil spirits simply on the fact that they cannot be seen with our physical eyes. It would be relevant to note that folk traditions of all nations have kept the notion of evil spirits. This is the case, for example, with the Persian religion, with its teaching about Ahriman and evil spirits – yazatas; it is also the case with the Greek religion about Erinyes, or Furies, and so on.[14]

Egyptians believed that each person upon birth receives a demon guardian; the existence of evil spirits is also acknowledged by Chinese Buddhists; according to their teaching, there are two realms of spirits: the clean ones – Negri, and the unclean ones – Asuras.

It goes without saying that all these beliefs are distorted, as they did not originate from a divine revelation. But the very existence of these beliefs gives us strong circumstantial evidence that the very notion of evil spirits' existence, as well as that of the good ones, does not contradict the reason.

Indeed, if in the visible world there are so many various things, then why not to conjecture that all intelligent and moral beings are not limited to mankind. And secondly, if we notice a clear graduality in creatures, which proceeds from the lowest forms of life toward the higher ones, then one

might conclude that there is also a similar graduality in moral creatures – in respect to God. That might be the reason why philosopher Plato taught that "there are spirits in the middle between man and God, which avoid evil people and help the good ones; they cannot be seen, even though they are present among us."[15] Actions of spirits are possible by themselves, like actions of one person can affect another one, or action of a person's soul on his body. Therefore, only depraved people deny the existence of good spirits, because they are far from them, and also the evil ones, because they are enslaved by them, without even noticing it.

The firm conviction of the existence of evil spirits in the ancient world is confirmed by the fact that the ancient philosophy was often connected with magic,[16] as was the case with the wise men of Pharaoh, who opposed Moses, and with Cyprian, who was later a martyr and a bishop of Antioch.

"Trust me," said Cyprian in his address, "I saw the devil himself. I propitiated him with sacrifices, and kissed, and talked with him and with his princes. He has loved me, praised my intelligence and said before everyone: "here is the new Jambres, who is quick to obey us and worthy of being in communion with us." And he promised to make me a demonic prince after I leave my body, and also promised to help me with everything during my life in the body, and gave me a regiment of demons to serve me. When I was leaving him, he exclaimed: "Take courage, brave Cyprian!" and then got up and saw me off, which surprised all the demonic princes. For this reason, they showed obeisance to me, seeing the honors that he gave me. His face was like a flower, his head was crowned with a crown, adorned with gold and precious stones, his garments were marvelous. When he turned to a side, the whole place trembled; many evil spirits were standing in great obedience before his throne: and then I gave myself entirely to him."[17] There was evidence, obtained from magic, which confirmed that evil spirits existed, but from that source alone, the humanity could not have the correct notion of evil spirits, because magic is a net, by means of which evil spirits entrap inexperienced people. Thus, it is clear that an evil spirit doesn't show himself in his real form. Because of pride and enmity toward God, the fallen spirits strive that man worship them; because of their mendacity, they use any means of temptation and deceit to obtain this goal. This way, the devil deceived Eve, feigning the use of God's words,[18] seduced Job's wife, teaching her excessive love for her husband and through this, blasphemy

against God;[19] this way he also deceives all people. He even tries to deceive saints by "tempting them" says St. Anthony, "with dreams and terrors, transforming himself sometimes into a woman's face, and sometimes into a scorpion's." For this reason, any Christian who desires to have accurate knowledge about spirits of evil, should leave without attention any knowledge of evil spirits which originated from traditions of men, experiments, magic, spiritualism and other such means.

To get accurate knowledge about the spirits of evil we have only one instrument – the Christian teaching, contained in the Holy Scriptures, and expounded by the writings of ancient Christian saints and teachers of the Church. Who is the devil, and what are his actions, – this we learn from the Holy Scriptures, which also show us the means to defeat him; and how to apply those means in practice, this we learn from the writings of the ancient Christian saints and lives of spiritual warriors, who dedicated their whole lives to struggle against him. Knowledge of the spirits of evil by holy spiritual warriors is a special gift of God; it is called "spiritual discernment;"[20] it is connected with the victory over unclean thoughts, dreams and sensations. The Lord granted this gift to prophet king David and, on behalf of the whole humanity, he then called out: "Bring my soul out of prison."[21] Indeed, due to our carnal state, we are incapable of seeing spirits, yet we are still capable to know our enemies enough so that we can withstand them.

According to the wise men of this world, the devil is just a personification of the evil which is inherent to us and acting in the world, and the subordinate spirits – are just a further development of that personification. But the God's word reveals to us that the whole space between the heavens and the earth, – all that visible azure abyss, serves as a dwelling place for fallen angels, who had been cast down from heavens.[22]

The teaching that the devil is indeed a really existing, personal, live and evil spirit is encountered on the first pages of the Bible. According to the testimony of the book of Genesis, the devil entered a snake, seduced our progenitors and convinced them to transgress the commandment of the Lord[23]. The fact that the devil was the culprit of that sin, which through Adam has ruined the whole humankind, is also acknowledged by the wise Solomon, in his Book of Wisdom. For this reason, the devil is called the "murderer from the beginning."[24]

The fact that Moses was also aware of the existence of evil spirits is evident from the book of Deuteronomy. Reciting the iniquities of Israelites, Moses says that they "offered sacrifices to demons, and not to God"[25], i.e., as explains St. John Chrysostom, they were offering sacrifices to idols which were inhabited by demons. In the book of Job, the devil is described in the same way, that is, as a slanderer. There he slandered God, and here – his righteous one, whom he has covered with painful boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head[26]. He would have smitten the righteous man, whom he hated, with death, if that hadn't been forbidden to him by God. The devil "moved David to number Israel."[27] The demon Asmodeus killed seven husbands who had, in turn, married Sara, daughter of Raguel;[28] an evil spirit also possessed Saul.[29]

Exactly the same qualities of cunningness, envy and craftiness are displayed by an evil spirit in the vision of prophet Micah in the book of Kings[30], and also in the book of prophet Zacharia.[31] In the first book, he promises to become a spirit of lies in mouths of prophets in order to move king Ahab to transgress a commandment of God; and in the second one he slanders the people of Israel so that their punishment be prolonged.

St. John the Theologian connects the truth of existence of evil spirits with the truth of the coming into the world of the Son of God: "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose, the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."[32] It follows then that not knowing who exactly the devil is, we cannot know what Jesus has done for us, and denial of existence of evil spirits leads to denial of the mystery of the fall, and consequently, of the mystery of redemption. Indeed, why would Jesus Christ need to come down to earth, when there was no devil? And denial of the redemption must necessarily lead to the denial of Christianity as a whole.

The fact that Jesus Christ was coming precisely for that reason, namely, to destroy the works of the devil, is attested by the entire biblical history.

"You are of your father the devil," says Jesus Christ to the Jews, "and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it."[33] Then, in his positive teaching and in parables, Jesus Christ often mentions the devil and his angels, and everywhere teaches about them

as about real entities, evil spirits, who always try to harm people or destroy them, and thus are destined to eternal fire. Depicting the Last Judgment, Christ says: “Then he will also say to those on the left hand, depart from me you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”[34] The Lord utters his condemnation to sinners, who are real beings; isn’t it clear from this that the devil and his angels are also real beings, for it is for them that the everlasting fire was originally prepared, even though it also awaits their followers – sinners.

According to Jesus Christ the Savior, Satan had tortured a woman with a spirit of infirmity, who was bent over for 18 years;[35] he was also the one who asked the Lord to sift Apostles as wheat.[36]

In other places of the Gospel there are words of Jesus Christ that there exists a whole kingdom of evil spirits, that the devil is the evil prince of that kingdom, that he has his own servants and therefore is called the demonic prince, that the devil – the demonic prince – is the “prince of this world,”[37] that the devil and his angels act together, without impeding, but supporting one another in order to harm people.[38]

Jesus Christ, when he explained the parable about the wheat and the tares, contrasts the devil with real entities and subjects: with Himself, with good people and evil ones, with angels and with the world. “The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked *one*.”[39] “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.”[40] Could it really be that the devil – not a real being, but a simple personification of evil – was put by Jesus Christ in the same category with real being, and that He would ascribe to a simple personification of evil such a real and very important part in the destiny of the world and man?..

And the Lord was very clear about the existence of evil spirits when He was healing the possessed. He never said that demonic possession was a natural disease, but everywhere He pointed out its culprits – evil spirits, and cast them out. The most striking example of this is the healing of a possessed man in the country of Gadarenes, who had his dwelling among the tombs, crying out, cutting himself with stones and terrifying all those who lived nearby. They tried to shackle him down, but he would easily break down the shackles with inhuman force. “What is your name?” asked him Jesus, “Legion,” – answered the demonized man (or rather, answered the demons

with his voice), “for we are many.” One could ask, what was that illness which afflicted that wretched man? “Epilepsy, seizures, rabies, nervous disorder,” that’s what most of the modern doctors would answer. It is very likely that the basis of a demonic possession was indeed some kind of bodily or mental disorder. In order to play a musical instrument, it is necessary that it be tuned; likewise, for an evil spirit to take control of a person, it is necessary that this person be in bodily or mental disorder. And the fact that those pitiful afflicted people whom the Gospel calls “possessed” were different from all other ill persons is evidenced by the Jews who, seeing them healed by Jesus, perceived that action as casting out demons.

Let us continue our story about the possessed man from Gadarenes. Jesus Christ had mercy on the wretched man, cast out from him a legion of demons, and they asked the Savior a permission to enter a herd of swine. Jesus allowed this, and immediately the demons revealed their destructive nature by casting the swine herd off the cliff into the sea.[41]

But who exactly drowned the swine? Certainly not the formerly demonized man, who was at the time sitting by the feet of Jesus Christ, and it’s not that some kind of disease entered into swine. It is evident that this was an action of the demonic legion.

After such a clear teaching of Jesus Christ, it might seem that there is no place for doubts regarding the certitude of evil spirits’ existence. However, not everyone sees in the words of Christ a teaching of actual existence of evil spirits, and many think that they cannot be taken literally, because He could adapt his words to the understanding of His contemporaries.

Such an opinion makes no sense for the following reasons: 1) Jesus Christ never lied, and indeed, could not lie, and always spoke out against superstitions. Because of His love for truth and for people, the Lord could not warn the latter and instill the fear of some evil and powerful enemies of the mankind into their souls if those enemies didn’t actually exist. 2) The Savior Himself looked at the demonized as at a dwelling of demons, and therefore when he talked to him, he addressed not the possessed person himself, but rather directly the demons, calling them unclean spirits and commanding them to leave the afflicted person.[42] He also talked about how a demon acts *after* he had been cast out: “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says: ‘I will return to my house from which I came’. And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other

spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first."[43] 3) Evil spirits who were in people, as entities separate from the persons in which they dwelled, confessed Jesus Christ as Son of God through the mouths of those persons, trembling before His power and authority over them, thereby involuntarily testifying that they are defeated by Him.[44]

Likewise, the holy Apostles did not doubt the existence of the devil. Like Jesus Christ, they taught about malicious activities of evil spirits, their pernicious influence on the mankind. When they were talking about Jesus Christ that He was healing all, who were possessed by the devil,[45] the Apostles themselves, following the example of their divine Teacher, healed the demonized[46] and, preaching Jesus Christ to people, considered the transition from paganism to Christianity as a transition from the authority of Satan to the authority of God.[47]

According to the teaching of the Apostles, Jesus Christ has taken upon Himself our flesh and blood so that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.[48] The devil is an actual person, otherwise the Apostle Jude wouldn't present him as someone contending with Archangel Michael when they disputed about the body of Moses.[49] Apostles taught that demons are intelligent spirits,[50] but evil ones.[51] Being very numerous,[52] they form their own kingdom, headed by Satan.[53] From these places of Scriptures it is clear that the devil is a really existing person. And that's the way they were also understood by ancient saints of the Christian Church. St. Ignatius the God-bearer in his epistles often admonished to avoid cunningness and tricks of the prince of this world and strengthen ourselves against his intrigues with humility, faith and love. An Angel, who, according to his birthright, was wiser than others, for his transgression and disobedience became a demon. Likewise, those who imitated him, and participated in his rebellion, became regiments of demons. The devil, according to the teaching of St. Irenaeus of Lyon, is a creation of God, just like all other Angels. He himself was the cause of his own apostasy. [54] According to Tertullian, anything that offends God should be ascribed to demons and unclean spirits.

The existence of evil spirits is also acknowledged by early fathers of the Christian Church. In their works (as we'll see later) they describe the nature of evil spirits, their original sin, the traps they set against people, and

so on. Particularly noteworthy is the evidence derived from the stories of spiritual warriors, as we can see it from their writings. These were the people who dedicated their entire life to spiritual warfare against spirits of evil. It wasn't rare that demons would appear to them before their physical eyes. Protecting themselves from demons by means of their highly moral life, the spiritual warriors would cast out demons from other people – the fact that they used as a powerful argument in discussions with pagans that the Christian faith was true. In the second apology of Justin the Martyr we read: "Jesus became a man and was born, according to the will of God the Father, for the sake of the people who believe in Him, and in order to crush the demons. This we know from what is happening before our eyes, for many of Christians healed, and still heal those who are afflicted by demons, rebuking them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified at the time of Pontius Pilate, whereas they could not be healed by conjurers or hypnotists." "Most of you know," says Minucius Felix, "that demons themselves come to great trembling from the words of our intercessory prayer: *In the Name of One True God*, and either immediately leave the possessed person, or depart gradually, depending on the faith of the afflicted, or the desire of the healer."[55] Tertullian writes: "As far as the (existence of) demons, not only we don't deny it, but we fight against them, we persecute them, cast them out of human bodies, as everyone knows. Bring in a person who is known to be possessed by demons, and let a Christian, whoever that might be, order the demon to speak. The demon will confess that he is really a demon, and that in some cases he tries to falsely pass himself for God."

The belief of the Church in existence of evil spirits and in their destructive influence is expressed in its prayers and rites. In its prayers, the Church instructs the believers to ask God about deliverance from evil spirits, crafty ones, demons, incorporeal enemies. "Deliver me, O Lord, from the mouth of the pernicious snake, gaping to devour me and to bring me down alive to hell."[56] "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered."

Thus, everything convinces us in the existence of evil spirits: the ancient traditions of nations, the reason, enlightened by the light of divine revelation, the experiences of spiritual warriors and, finally, the traditional beliefs of the Church. Therefore, as said St. John of Kronstadt, "recalcitrant unbelief in the existence of evil spirits is *de facto* demonic possession, for it contradicts the truth, contradicts the divine revelation; a man who denies existence of evil spirits is already swallowed up by the devil and, sitting in darkness and in

shadow of death, is incapable of seeing the Sun of Righteousness."[57]

◆ ◆ ◆

II – THE ORIGINS OF EVIL SPIRITS, THEIR SIN AND PUNISHMENT

According to the teaching of Eastern Orthodox Church, "the invisible was created before the visible, and Angels before men," that is, Angels were created before everything else, when nothing, except God, existed. This is apparent from the first words of the book of Genesis: "In the beginning God created heavens and the earth."[58]

Since the visible skies were created after, then these words really mean spirits, who are presented in the Scriptures as inhabiting heavens – and that's why Moses doesn't ascribe to heavens the same disorder that he ascribes to the earth, which "was without form and void." This can be concluded from the words of God to Job: "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted with joy;"[59] From here, we can see that Angels already existed on the 4th day of the Creation.

The Creator of Angels has created them in His own image – incorporeal, and as for their nature – like a certain spiritual and nonmaterial fire,[60] as the prophet king David says: "He makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire,"[61] describing their fervor of love toward God, their eagerness in serving God and men, their pursuit of heavenly things and the fact that they, unlike us, don't have any coarse corporeality.

Calling Angels incorporeal beings, the divine revelation teaches that Angels are also personal beings, who have intelligence[62] and free will.[63] In their intelligence Angels appear as paragon of intelligence:[64] they know that, which man does not and cannot know,[65] yet their knowledge doesn't extend to the mysteries of the inner heart of man and to unpredictable future.[66] But not all Angels remained steadfast in their original, given to them by God, wisdom and holiness: by their own volition, many of them became evil. Between the Angels in heavens there was one great, by given to him from God power and authority, light-bearing spirit, named for this reason, Lucifer. He was one of the spirits, who were closest to God. Elevated above all other spirits, Lucifer conceived an idea to become an independent king and said in his heart: "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mound of the congregation, on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the

Most High"[67] And the Lord cast down from heaven the light-bearing spirit, who darkened himself with rebellion against God, to hell and to the depths of abyss.[68] And as Lucifer was a commander of some spirits, he also managed to convince them to take part in his rebellion. This way, some holy Angels became spirits of evil.[69] Thus, they become evil by their own volition, as our Lord Jesus Christ was saying to Jews that "the devil was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him."[70] If he did not stand in the truth, it means that he originally was in the truth, and had all means to remain in it and avoid any temptation. In accordance with the words of Jesus Christ was also the teaching of the Apostles: "And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgement of the great day," writes Apostle Jude.[71] The word "domain" here means the original state of the Angels, which consisted of both inner perfection of mind and will, as well as of the outer merits of the incorporeal spirits. The Angels could have kept their original state (domain) and retain the dwelling which corresponded to that state, but by their volition they did not keep neither one, nor the other. Apostle Peter in the 2nd epistle says about the fall of angels that "God did not spare the angels who sinned"[72] and thus expresses the thought that some angels had acted against God's will.

Following the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Apostles, the Eastern Orthodox Church has always held the opinion that even though Angels, from their creation, had perfection of mind and will, God did not put into them an unconditional necessity to always choose only good, and they still retained the freedom of choice between good and evil. Having possibility of inclination to evil, some misused that freedom of choice and became evil. The saints of the Church teach about this as follows. "Demon is called dragon, because he rebelled against God, but in the beginning he was an angel" writes St. Theophilus of Antioch, and St. Irenaeus of Lyon says that "the devil himself was the cause of his apostasy." The same thought is also confirmed by St. Anthony the Great: "Evil spirits are so called not because they were created this way. God did not create anything evil – and they were created good." And St. Makarios the Great: "All intelligent beings, and I mean angels, demons and souls, were originally made by the Creator pure, and if some of them became inclined toward evil, that happened to them due to their own choice, because by their own volition they strayed from the

correct thoughts."[73] Particularly noteworthy here is the discourse of St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "The first culprit of sin and originator of evil is the devil. Before the devil, nobody sinned. He sinned not because of his nature, or out of necessity, as then there wouldn't be any sin. On the contrary, having been created good, by his own volition he became the devil and from his works received this name. He was an archangel, but later on was called the devil[74] because of his slander against God before men; and he did this in order to seduce and lure away men from the way of the truth. Having been originally a good servant of God, he became Satan in the fullest sense of this name, as Satan mean enemy."[75]

The idea that the devil had fallen by his own volition is also voiced by St. Basil the Great: "Demons don't get repulsion to good from their nature, but by their own volition, through falling away from good, they fell into sin, that is, into evil. There cannot be evil proceeding from good. So why is man wicked? Because of his own will, succumbing to the teaching and influence of the devil, who is slandering God before him. Why the devil is evil? Also, by his own volition, for he too had free will, and had power to remain with God or depart from Him. Archangel Gabriel always stands in the presence of God, and Satan – is an angel completely fallen away from his original domain. It was the free will which kept the first one in heavenly ranks, and cast down the second one. One was saved by his love for God, and the other was removed from God due to his resistance to God's will." So, as St. Gregory of Nyssa puts it, "the devil deprived himself of joyful life."

It would also be relevant here to cite St. John Damascene who writes the following: "The leader of angelic forces of the heavenly domain, to whom God entrusted the stewardship of the Earth, wasn't created evil by his nature, but was good and was created for good, and didn't have in himself even a slightest trace of evil from the Creator, but he didn't endure the enlightenment and honor, granted to him by the Creator, and by his own volition turned from the natural to the unnatural and rebelled against God – his Creator. In his desire to elevate himself against Him, he fell away from good and fell into evil. Evil is but deprivation of good, as darkness is but deprivation of light. Good is spiritual light, whereas evil is spiritual darkness. Being created by God to be light and being good, he through the action of his own will became darkness.[76] An innumerable multitude of subordinate angels then separated, followed him, and fell down along with him; thus, they became evil by their own volition, having willfully become inclined toward

evil, because of their free will, received from the Creator."[77]

Thus, from the words of the saints cited above, it is clear that the devil, having been created good, through the action of his own will, became evil. Now it is natural to ask: when did he fall? The fall of angels wasn't during the six days of creation, for according to the book of Genesis, "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good"[78] If during the first six days of creation all creatures were good, then it would be unreasonable to think that during these six days the Angels were deprived of their original blissful state. But the fall of the Angels preceded the fall of man, for if the Angels remained steadfast in truth, then there would be no tempter, who caused them to transgress the commandment of God. What was the original sin of the Angels? The Scriptures don't give a direct answer, but it is most likely that it was pride, and that one of the Angels, the more perfect one, fell in love with his own perfection, and by his example convinced the other subordinate to him spirits to do likewise. This is evident, first and foremost, from the temptation of the forefathers, for the tempter incited in them the desire of a higher perfection than the image of God, in which they had been created. From this it could be concluded that the devil himself had committed the same sin, with which he tempted the man. "By the envy of the devil, death entered into the world," says Solomon.[79]

Jesus Christ said: "The devil does not stand in the truth and is the father of lies."[80] Does not stand in the truth, i.e. did not keep the correct views of his true relation toward God. Thus, there appeared in him a lie, that is, erroneous conception about his own perfection and power. An exaggerated notion about himself has led him to the thought of possibility to become equal to the Most High[81] and become independent of Him (there are numerous examples in history when generals, being exalted by kings, aim to take their place).

The fact that the devil fell because of his pride is also evident from one place from the epistle of Paul to Timothy. Having given the commandment that a bishop should not be from recently converted Christians, Apostle Paul explains the reason for it: "lest being puffed up with pride he should fall into the same condemnation as the devil."[82] Similar crimes merit similar condemnations. If Apostle Paul says that for the reason of pride one could fall into the same condemnation as the devil, then this means that the Apostle considers that the devil's sin was indeed that of pride. That the original sin of

the fallen angels is pride is clear from aforementioned epistle of Jude about the angels who did not keep their domain.[83] The devil did not keep his angelic dignity, and at that, this failure to keep it was undoubted, otherwise it wouldn't have been punished. In the devil there was an expression of disobedience to God's will, and the basis of this disobedience could only be pride, for Lucifer had everything that a created spirit could possibly have.

That the pride was the reason of the devil's fall can be concluded from the insane haughtiness of the devil with which he addressed the Son of God: "All kingdoms of the world will I give to you, and all this authority and their glory, for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish"[84] "The devil has sinned from the beginning"[85] says St. John the Theologian, and the wise son of Sirach says: "The beginning of sin is pride."[86]

Such a view on this question (of the devil's sin) has always been predominant and most widespread in the Church. "Envy had darkened Lucifer," says St. Gregory the Theologian, "who had fallen because of conceit. Having felt himself divine, he imagined himself to be God, and conceived in his mind the idea to possess the people, which he implemented, by casting Adam down from paradise by means of the woman, whom he convinced that the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil had been forbidden only temporarily, so that people wouldn't become gods."[87] Saint Basil the Great says: "Our blissful life in paradise was unbearable to the devil; by envying it he was brought to enmity with us; for how could he, who had been cast out of the angelic rank, indifferently see how a carnal creature, through spiritual progression, is elevated to the angelic rank, which he himself had lost?"[88] In another place the same saint says: "The first sin is perturbation and pride, because the devil, having become a perturber from satiation with the good which was granted to him, fell away from God and detached from Him other angelic forces saying: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.'[89] He who becomes prideful will fall under the same condemnation with the devil,[90] i.e. will be condemned with the originator of pride, for God Himself opposes the proud, but to the humble He gives His grace."[91]

Explaining Isaiah 10:14, St. Basil the Great says that this prophetic word refers to the prince of this world. "My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people, and as one gathers eggs that are left, I have gathered all the earth." – These words are words of someone prideful, who elevated

himself against the Most High, words of a disobedient and an apostate, who in his sin of apostasy has dragged with himself his followers. His pride is not against men, but against God." From St. Gregory we read the following: "The first of the heavenly lights, because of his pride, having lost the light and the glory, persecutes the mankind with eternal hatred." – And elsewhere, "The devil for his conceit is cast down from his heavenly rank, but he did not fall alone. And since he perished because of his impudence, he dragged down with him many, dragged them down out of his envy toward the godly assembly of the One Who reigns on high, so that he could also reign over many."

St. John Damascene says: "Man is defeated by the envy of the devil, for the envious hater of good – the devil, who for his conceit had been cast down, could not bear that we acquire heavenly blessings. Therefore, he ensnares the wretched man with a promise of becoming God; having elevated him to the heights of his own conceit, he then throws him down to the abyss in which he himself had fallen."

Tatian says: "Demons in their insanity got carried away with pride, and rebelling, dared to snatch for themselves the Divinity."

The sin of the Angels was extremely important, because it offended God – the highest and most perfect Being, the Creator of Angels, who created them only out of His own infinite goodness; besides, the fallen angels had all means to ward off the evil, as their mind was enlightened by spiritual light, and their will was much more inclined toward good than toward evil. The sin of the angels was exacerbated by the fact that they had sinned in full conscience and freedom, as nothing from the outside had compelled them to do so. And for that very sin, "darkness, and death, and infirmity are imposed on the prince of this world, the rulers of the darkness of this age, spiritual hosts of wickedness and every power, hostile to God's nature," says St. Basil the Great. St. Gregory the Theologian says: "The angel who dared to create the disturbance and elevated himself against God or, according to the prophetic word, exalt his throne above the stars of God;[92] bears the punishment analogous to his conceit, and is condemned to be darkness instead of light, having himself become the darkness."[93]

But what was the punishment that the evil spirits received for their sin? This question can be answered from the Scriptures. Evil spirits are in a permanent state of torturous anguish and inner misery, for which reason they cannot find rest, and thus are constantly seeking to distract and entertain

themselves with malicious activity.[94] Continual fear[95] pursues them, for they know that having been bound by chains of darkness, they are reserved for judgement and torture,[96] and that everlasting fire awaits them, where they will be tortured forever and ever.[97]

Such a separation of evil spirits from God will be eternal, for the Savior Himself said that the eternal fire is prepared for the devil and his angels. “Depart from Me,” will say the Righteous Judge to the sinners, “into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”[98] “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”[99] The very repetition of the word “eternal,” applied both to the righteous and to the sinners, implies the endlessness of the punishment, for just as endless is the life, inherited by the righteous, just as endless will be the punishment, which the demons and the iniquitous will undergo. Apostle Jude in his 6th verse states that the Angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness. And those who are in everlasting chains, have no hope of forgiveness. And St. John, the Seer of mysteries of God, saw how Satan, who seduced the nations, was thrown into a lake of fire and brimstone where, together with the beast and the false prophet, they will be tormented day and night[100] forever and ever.

Despite such a clear teaching of the Scriptures about the endlessness of punishment for evil spirits, some don’t accept it as if contradicting the common sense.[101] They say: “How to reconcile the endlessness of punishment for evil spirits with goodness of God?” To this we could answer: “God indeed is infinitely good, but at the same time He is also infinitely righteous and infinitely holy.” The sin of the evil spirits was a primeval sin, originally conceived by them, a sin which was not due to some bodily infirmity, but a sin of incorporeal and perfect spirits, and therefore the punishment for it must be particularly severe.[102] On the other hand, with prolonged and stubborn persistence in evil, the demons as if hardened in sin, so much so that correction for them became impossible. Evil spirits cannot come to the thought of repentance, and that’s because they had fallen due to their conscious positive disposition toward evil, and because of a deliberate decision of their own will; they fell with an insolent rebellion against God Himself, rebellion which was stubborn and bitter.[103] “If they repented, they could have received mercy, but they are perpetually evil,”[104] says Justin the Philosopher. Same thought is expressed by St. Dimitry of Rostov: “The fallen

spirits came into such spitefulness that it is not possible for them to repent." The change of the destiny of fallen spirits is also impossible because they don't have the Mediator. There is a Mediator only for people, "who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ."[105] – for Jesus Christ did not receive into the Unity of His Divine Hypostasis the nature of Angels, but the nature of man: *"For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham."*[106]

◆ ◆ ◆

III – THE DARK REALM OF EVIL SPIRITS

Even though the fallen spirits are bound with chains of darkness and reserved for the judgment of the great day,[107] their pride compelled them to form their own dark kingdom, with its own hierarchy, and in which there are different ranks and levels, authorities and subordinates. This kingdom is referred to by Jesus Christ: "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?"[108] The fact that the fallen spirits are not all equal between themselves, and that they have differences and co-subordination, is attested by Jesus Christ: if an unclean spirit finds the place unoccupied in the man, from whom he had been cast out, he comes back and "*takes with him seven other spirits, more wicked that himself*"[109] Consequently, they have differences in their strength of evil. God's word also firmly establishes that they also have a hierarchy, that is, they have bosses and subordinates.

In the Scriptures, fallen spirits are called either evil spirits,[110] or unclean spirits,[111] or spiritual hosts of wickedness,[112] or demons,[113] or deceiving spirits.[114] Apostle Peter calls them "angels who sinned,"[115] and Apostle Jude "angels who did not keep their proper domain,"[116] but everywhere God's word singles out the main one of them, or their chief. It calls him *the devil*, that is, slanderer,[117] Satan or adversary[118], tempter,[119] Belial, or ruler of the void,[120] Beelzebub or the ruler of the unclean,[121] the wicked one,[122] the ruler of this world,[123] a murderer from the beginning,[124] a liar and a father of lies,[125] the ruler of the demons,[126] who deceives the whole world,[127] the dragon and the serpent of old,[128] the power of darkness; [129] all the other demons, in respect to the main one, are called his angels,[130] ministers of Satan.[131] Apostle Paul distinguishes between evil spirits – principalities, powers and rulers of the darkness of this age,[132] i.e. calls them, among others, in the same terms as generally applied to different hierarchies of the angelic world.[133] From this it is evident that evil spirits have kept the same relationships between one another in the same degree and form as they had them before the fall, except now their activity has taken another form – an evil one. Before, it was based on their progression in good, and now it is

predicated on their progression in evil…

"The difference in evil spirits," says St. John Cassian, "depends on the difference in perfections that they had received at their creation, and on their subsequent successes in evil activities. The difference is explained by the fact that those differences in authority that they had received originally, just like the angelic forces, they still hold them either because of their former position, or from the other side – depending on the degree of their evilness, in which each power would grow, doing evil."

If the evil spirits kept the same degrees that they had before the fall, then it would be reasonable to conclude that they have essentially the same nature as the good Angels. Indeed, the Scripture calls them spirits,[134] devoid of materiality or carnality.[135] However, ancient saints and teachers of the Church understood incorporeality of Angels, and consequently, of evil spirits, in a limited sense, – namely, that they are incorporeal only compared to us, who are clad in material flesh. St. John Damascene says: "Angels are called incorporeal and nonmaterial (only) in comparison to us, for in comparison to God everything is coarse and material. Only the Divinity, in the strict sense of the word, is (truly) nonmaterial. They are invisible. However, even that quality is applicable only in a limited fashion: Angel, soul, demon, even though they don't have coarse materiality, they still have certain appearance and limitedness, innate to their nature. The Divine Being alone is undepictable, completely without appearance, or image, and unlimited."

Thus, evil spirits have in their nature a certain degree of extremely thin materiality, and in their appearance they resemble men. And perhaps due to such a resemblance, the Lord had once called the devil "a man."[136] St. Pachomius the Great, for example, once saw a demon in appearance of a beautiful woman, coming to his skete with a multitude of servants.[137] Scriptures ascribe to (some) evil spirits deafness and dumbness. "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him,"[138] and the deaf spirit, who didn't hear the voice of Apostles, and didn't obey their commands, immediately left the afflicted man. In a story of another healing of a possessed man, the Gospel says that this demon was dumb.[139] However, with permission of God, demons can also take appearances other than human form, in order to disturb people. So, in order to seduce St. Hilarion, devil would come during his prayer in appearance of a wolf, or a fox.[140] Evilness and fallen state of demons have been also reflected in their outward

appearance. Having kept their natural image, they distorted it with traits of terrible bestiality, and that's why the Psalmist cries out: "do not deliver the life of your turtledove to the wild beast!"[141]; that's why the righteous Job saw the devil as a terrifying monster.[142]

As creatures, bearing a certain degree of similarity to men, demons can cry. So, for example, they were crying that St. Makarios escaped their hands and entered the heavenly abodes.[143]

Possessing a certain extremely thin, yet still not absolutely nonmaterial body, demons can feel blows. Here is what we read in the life of St. Andrew Fool-for-Christ: once St. Andrew, who was in the church of St. Anastasios in Constantinople, at night was visited by one of the rulers of demons, accompanied by many other dark spirits. The demon had an axe in his hand and all demons were armed with various kinds of weapons. They all rushed onto the saint to kill him, and the saint cried out to God for help. Suddenly, there was a thunder and there appeared a large assembly of men, dressed in white robes, and after them came a graceful elder. His face was brighter than the Sun and many servants were following him. He told them: "close the doors, so that no-one would escape, and capture all the Ethiops." The order was immediately executed. St. Andrew then overheard one of the demons saying to another: "Woe to us! We were deceived: John will torture as severely." John ordered those in white robes, who came with him, to take off the iron chain from Andrew's neck. John, taking the chain and folding in three, stood in the doors of the church and ordered that the demons be brought to him one by one. They brought the first demon, spread him on the ground, and John gave him hundred blows with the chain. The demon was crying like a man: "Have pity on me!" Such punishment was meted out to all other demons as well. After this, John told them: "Go and show yourselves to you father – Satan: how will he like this?" Then, the demons disappeared and the men in white robes also departed. The graceful elder came to Andrew, told him that he was St. John the Theologian and that he was entrusted with care and protection of Andrew."[144]

Having an extremely thin, spiritual corporeality, demons, just like holy Angels, are not omnipresent, but they still have the ability of very rapid travel through space. So, the Lord Jesus Christ said about wanderings of a demon, who had been cast out of man's body, the following: "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dark places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says: 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he

comes, he finds it empty, swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there."[145] In the book of Job, it is narrated that Satan, when he appeared in the heavenly assembly, answered the question of the Lord "where he came" by the following words: "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."[146]

When the Lord was fasting in the wilderness, He was approached by the devil, who was taking the Lord from place to place: first, he took Him up into the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, then took Him up onto a very tall mountain. It is clear that these rapid transfers were done in a manner similar to what the Angel did to Philippe when he transferred him from the road in Gaza to Azotus.[147]

The Scriptures also ascribe to fallen angels free will.[148] They also know God; however, this knowledge only imparts them fear: "You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe – and tremble!"[149] writes Apostle James. Evil spirits often confessed Jesus Christ the Savior to be Son of God.[150]

The evil angels also know themselves, because if the spirit of a man knows what is inside the man,[151] then, of course, the same can be said about evil spirits. The current state of the world is also known to them, as it is evident from the book of Job. The devil, having passed around the whole earth, said about this to the Lord, and the Lord did not invalidate his words as false.[152] The evil spirits also know some things from the future, especially those proceeding from definitive and unchangeable causes. As for more random future, it may be partially known to them from God's revelation[153] and may also be deduced by them from observing peoples' behavior.

Once a demon appeared before St. Andrew and made a prediction about disordered moral state of Christians in last times. "In those times," said the demon, "men will be more evil than I am, and small children will surpass elders in wickedness. Then I will have rest. Then I won't teach men anything, but they themselves will do my will." St. Andrew said: "How do you know this? For demons cannot foresee the future." To this the demon answered: "Our most intelligent father Satan, being in hell, forecasts everything by means of magic and passes that knowledge to us."[154]

But having intelligence, the evil spirits have distorted it so much that instead of the main quality of the mind – pursuit of the truth, the main trait of

their minds became hatred for the truth, for which reason the devil is called in the Gospel “father of lies,”[155] and in Revelation – “slanderer.”[156]

The will of demons, which became hardened in evil, obviously can direct their activity only to evil, but even demons have certain freedom, because from many evils they can choose one. Instead of love, the nature of the devil has been filled with enmity, hatred and envy toward God and His creatures. In him, according to the words of St. John Chrysostom, we have an enemy perpetual, who has for us irreconcilable hatred, therefore Apostle Paul arms Christians with “the whole armor of God”[157] so that they can withstand the devil.

As far as the number of spirits, who fell away from God and subordinated themselves to the prince of darkness, the Scriptures say that it is exceedingly great. The Savior calls the society of the fallen spirits a whole kingdom.[158] In the country of Gadarenes, Jesus Christ had cast out of a man a whole legion[159] of demons.[160] If only in one person there were so many, then the total number of them is most likely simply innumerable.

St. John Damascene says that “an innumerable multitude of angels had been separated from God by the devil, followed him and fell down with him.” According to the book of Revelation, the dragon’s tail drew a third of the stars of heaven[161] from which one might conclude that Satan had taken with himself a third of the heavenly dwellers, – therefore, the holy Angels are actually more numerous than the demons.

Spirits have dwellings according to their nature. As long as the devil was an Angel of light, he dwelled in heavens.[162] In heavens had happened his most unfortunate transformation from light to darkness; his example influenced many other angels.[163] In the wake of this transformation, Archangel Michael and other Angels, who remained faithful to God, “fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”[164] The dwelling place of demons became that azure abyss, which separates the Church militant from the Church triumphant and which in common language is called *the air*.[165] The validity of this thought is indicated in the Scriptures. Thus, in the book of Job the devil himself testifies that he went around the whole earth and the air.[166] The location of fallen

spirits in the air is also indicated by the following words of Apostle Paul: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places.”[167] The assembly of these spirits Apostle Paul calls “power of the air,” and the chief of the demons, the devil, “prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”[168] Here is how this place is explained by St. Athanasios the Great: “The devil, the enemy of our kind, having fallen from heaven, wanders in the space of this lower air, where, exercising authority over other demons, for the reason of them having become like him because of their disobedience and pride, with their assistance seduces men with false visions and tries to hamper those who strive to ascend toward heavens.”[169]

St. Basil the Great also talks about the dwelling place of evil spirits: “The seat of authority of the devil is in the air,” as says the Apostle: “you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”[170] And the devil is called the prince of this world, because his authority is over the countries across the face of the earth. So the Lord says: “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”[171] When it is said about the army of the devil that they are “spiritual hosts of wickedness”[172], one should not forget that the Scriptures usually call heaven “air,” like in “birds of heaven.”[173] In his explanation on Psalm 41 St. John Chrysostom says: “How many demons are flying in this air? How many opposing authorities? If God only allowed us to see their terrifying and abominable appearance, we would have immediately gone insane.”[174] St. Gregory the Theologian calls Satan a “king who is over the earth,” and thus expresses the thought that his kingdom is located right above the earth, that is, in the air. And St. Anthony the Great directly says that “demons drift around in the air.” If the evil spirits fill the air, then it is clear that they are all around us. Here is what St. Theophan the Recluse says about this: “Normal translation of the words ‘in heavenly places’ means that the spirits fly about in the air, and as the air envelops us from everywhere, likewise they also surround us and continually assail us, like mosquitos in dump places.”[175] Flying about in the azure abyss of the skies, called the air, demons also descend on the earth, the fact, mentioned in the Gospels, which narrate about various actions of demons on the earth. Demons can enter men,[176] and

animals.[177] Demons live in waters, which, according to the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church, are sanctified every year on the day of Theophany of our Lord, when the Church asks Him, in her intercessory prayers, for cleansing of waters from demons.

In order to give more complete information about the location of evil spirits, one should note that currently the regular location of the devil, the head of the fallen angels is Sheol, or underworld. This dwelling was foretold to the fallen angel by holy prophet Isaiah: “you shell be brough down to Sheol.”[178] This prophesy has been fulfilled for the prince of the air through the authority of the Savior of men – the God-man Jesus Christ. The Savior is that great Angel-God, having the key of the abyss, who came down from heaven and, having become incarnate, used his human flesh as a snare rope, having stretched it on the cross for binding with it that serpent of old, the devil. The Lord has bound Satan for the whole period between His two comings, and imprisoned him in the abyss, and locked him, and put a seal over him. Being imprisoned and sealed in his material prison, the devil by necessity must have a certain kind of thin materiality, otherwise no material prison could hold him. Before the second coming of the Lord, “Satan will be released from his prison, and will go out to the four corners of the earth to deceive the nations.”[179]

◆ ◆ ◆

IV – INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE

After the fall of the evil spirits from heaven into the aerial realm,[180] they completely lost access to the realm of the heavenly dwellers, and therefore all their malicious attention is directed exclusively toward that, which is closest to them – the earth, with the intent to sow, promote and establish evil. Thus, evil consists an essential necessity of the devil, who doesn't think of anything else except evil, doesn't find rest or delight in anything but evil activity. The kingdom of good, like the kingdom of God, is repulsive to him, and therefore he strives, through people and subordinate to him spirits, to impede the spread of the very notion of good in every possible way; works on the destruction of the kingdom of God on earth.[181] According to the words of the Lord Himself, the devil is His enemy: for on that field, where the Lord had sown the wheat, the devil then sowed tares.[182]

In his enmity toward God, the devil had separated from Him people in paradise, and it so happened that the "man," as wrote St. Gregory the Theologian, "created for the glory of God, by envy of the devil and through tasting of sin, to his misfortune, departed from God. Having detached people from God, the devil then directed all his efforts to retain people under his authority, and to that end, strived to turn peoples' hearts away from God. And if they somehow would get a desire to get back to God, this desire would be continually thwarted by the devil, who would thus keep them under his authority. To attract people under his authority, the devil would make use of their misdirected desire to find God and deceive them, according to his wish; leading them around like blind persons, seeking the way, he would disperse them across various perilous rapids and precipitate them into the abyss of death and perdition.[183] Before Jesus Christ, such abyss was the religion of paganism. "The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God,"[184] writes Apostle Paul. The validity of these words of the Apostle is confirmed by history. In the story of martyrdom of St. George, it is narrated that St. George, after many tortures, was addressed by the emperor Diocletian who, among other things, said to him: "If you want to submit to me, then all the tortures that I had inflicted upon you, I will amend with many honors." The saint then said: "If you allow me, o emperor, let's go to the

temple and see those gods that you worship." The emperor, full of joy, went to the temple of Apollo with a multitude of people and with all his entourage, taking St. George along with him.

When they entered the temple and prepared a sacrifice, there was a great silence: all were looking at the martyr, expecting that he should offer a sacrifice to gods. But the saint, coming closer to the idol of Apollo and raising his hand toward him, asked him, who didn't have a soul, as if he was someone alive: "Is that you who want to accept a sacrifice from me, as God?" Having said that, the saint made over him a Sign of the Cross. Then the demon, who lived in that idol, answered: "No, I am not God. There is only one God, the One whom you preach, and as for us, we are just angels, who had served Him, but became apostates, and because of our envy, we now deceive people." The saint said to him again: "Then how dare you to remain here, when I, who is a servant of the truth, have come near?" After these words, a certain woeful voice was heard from the idols, and then they suddenly all fell down and broke apart."[185]

St. Athanasios the Great testifies that demons have been deceiving people by means of various apparitions, dwelling in water sources and rivers, trees or stones, and frightened the ignorant with scary phantoms.[186]

The attitude of demons toward the sacrifices, which are offered to them, is described by St. John Chrysostom in his "Word on Vavila."[187] Having recited the circumstances which led to building of Apollo's temple in Daphne, near Antioch, Chrysostom says that the devil, having made use of false traditional tales, put a demon into the temple for the purpose of deceiving and seducing people. The demon, being present near the idol, would give prophesies, by means of which he helped to uphold the delusions of pagans. When the relics of St. Vavila were transferred to Daphne, the demon first became silent, and then completely departed from the temple. "That's the custom of demons," adds the saint, "that when men offer them sacrifices as if to gods, with smoke and stench of blood, then they like rapacious and insatiable wolves, remain in those places for nutrition and gratification. And when no-one offers them such sacrifices, then they disappear as if from hunger. As long as such sacrifices are offered, and as long as those defiling rituals are performed, the demons stay there and rejoice."[188] And how it is that the spirits of evil are able to feed upon the sacrifices, brought before idols, is explained by St. Basil the Great: "Demons, as they are addicted to pleasures and passions, to a great extent enjoy and

feed upon sacrifices. At the time when the sacrifices are burned, the blood turns into vapor, and thus being decomposed into its thinnest constituent parts, passes into a state analogous to the nature of demons. Obviously, it's not that they literally eat it and fill with it their stomachs, but they do it like certain simple animals, such us oysters, and others of that kind, that absorb food with all their body. For that reason, demons avidly devour gases, proceeding from burning sacrifices, and absorb smoke of burning incense."[189]

Explaining the verse 10 of prophet Isaiah, the same saint says: "As I have done to Samaria and her idols, shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?"[190] How could cry the idols, which are made of wood, stone or other matter, and which received from an artist their appearance of men, animals, tetrapods, or birds, or reptiles, as were the statues of Egyptians?.. This happens as follows: the pieces of wood, which are shaped with human hands into a certain image and appearance, and in general all idols regardless of which material they were made of, cheap or expensive, are invisibly indwelled, and accompanied, by certain demons, who take pleasure in unclean sacrifices. Near butcher houses, where butchers discard spoiled and curdled blood, there are always dogs, greedy for that kind of food; likewise the demons, who are enslaved to gluttony, greedily seeking gratification, smell and decomposition of sacrificial blood, fly around the altars, dedicated to them… The authority of demons over the statues, dedicated to them, is clearly indicated by a story, which we read in the book of Samuel. "When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face."[191] The effigy, visible to all, was Dagon; the one that has fallen to its face was a demon, toppled by the glory which surrounded the Arc of the Covenant; the demon fell on its face, and with him he also overturned the visible object. For this reason, those who eat of foods, sacrificed to idols, are considered partakers of demonic table.[192] That's why it is said: idols shall cry, that is, the demons who are indwelling them.[193]

The devil also deceives people through sorcerers. Apostle Paul calls the sorcerer Elymas "full of all deceit and all fraud, son of the devil, enemy of all righteousness."[194] Transforming himself into an angel of light,[195] the devil incites in people unclean thoughts and desires, as testified by the book of Acts in the story of Ananias and Sapphira. "Why," says Apostle Peter, "has

Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?"[196] The devil sometimes acts on the body, inflicting physical sufferings. "And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me"[197] says Apostle Paul. For this reason, anything that is evil in this world, according to the teaching of the Apostles, is the work of the devil. "He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning,"[198] and Apostle Paul calls a deviation onto the ways of sin "turning aside after Satan."[199] The devil is also the cause of mental blindness of all those who don't accept the Gospel;[200] they are described as being taken captive by him to do his will.[201] The Scriptures also call children of the devil all those who don't love their brethren.[202] Even the circumstances which prevented Apostle Paul from visiting Thessaloniki, are considered being caused by influence of Satan.[203]

Ancient saints and teachers of the Church considered all evils befalling the Church, such as persecutions, heresies and schisms, as caused by Satan and his minions. Minucius Felix says: "I will address the very source of lie and deception, from which proceeds all this darkness; I will attempt to deeply penetrate into it and to clearly show it. There exist lying spirits, deprived of heavenly purity. These spirits lost the purity of their nature, defiling themselves with depravities and, for their own consolation in their misfortune, as they themselves are already lost, they don't cease to destroy others; themselves being corrupt, they strive to spread their pernicious deception; being separated from God, they struggle to remove all from God, introducing among people all kinds of false religions and other falsehoods. These unclean spirits – demons; they inspire the soothsayers, who pronounce prophesies, mixed with lies. They are deceiving and are deceived – either not knowing the truth, or knowing it but keeping it secret, or obscuring it, so that not to endanger themselves. They turn people away from God and from heavens, disturb peoples' lives, cause disorder to all, secretly entering the bodies of people; cause diseases, frighten the minds."[204] St. Irenaeus says: "Satan made man ungrateful toward his Creator, darkened the love which man has for God, and blinded his mind, so that he would have inappropriate notions about God, comparing himself to Him and putting himself on the same level with Him."[205]

St. Anthony the Great says: "Evil spirits are striving by any means to attract us to sin. They conceal their hatred toward us and their hostile actions

against us, put blasphemous thoughts in our mind, make us doubt the truths of our faith. In order to bring us to unbelief, they darken our mind, arouse in our heart depraved desires; they throw us into a state of depression and despair, incite anger, generate in us the inclination to judge others but always justify ourselves, teach us to slander others and yet to talk in a polite and friendly fashion with those whom we hate because of their own instigation, show us external flaws of our neighbor but hide from us our own corruption, incite strife and disagreements when we, instigated by them, consider ourselves better than others. Moreover, they incite us to undertake projects which exceed our capacities, and distract us from doing those things which are useful and necessary."[206]

Let us also cite here the words of St. Athanasios of Alexandria about the influence that the devil has on people: "Our adversary the devil, envying the great blessings that we are about to receive, walks around us and attentively watches, in order to steal the seeds of the Word, which are in us. For that reason, the Lord seals in us His commandments with His warning: "Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He' and 'The time has drawn near.' Therefore, do not go after them."[207] Without a doubt, something great is provided to us in the Word: we are provided with the way to avoid the deception, which could be produced by outward appearances of objects… If the great demon were to immediately reveal himself, then everyone would chase him away as the serpent, as the dragon, seeking to devour everyone. For this reason, he hides, in order to deceive men with false appearances, and having deceived them, to shackle them in his chains. It is like when somebody who wants to ensnare someone's children into slavery to himself, when the parents are away, takes on their appearance. By means of that subterfuge, having entrapped the children with their ardent love for the parents, leads them far away, and destroys the misfortunate: so does the corrupt demon, he doesn't dare to show himself to anybody the way he really is; knowing however, how much people love the truth, he puts onto himself a disguise of the truth."[208] In these words the saint talks not only about undeniability of evil spirits' influence on people, but also about the cunningness, with which the spirit of evil injects poison into his followers.

The influence of evil spirits on people is also verified by the experiences of those persons who continuously observe their spiritual life. Here is what writes St. John of Kronstadt: "No, whatever you say, but a man is sometimes

too irritated and enraged not by himself, but due to the most active incitation of the devil. Just observe yourself or others during a bout of irritation or anger, when you or someone else would wish to literally tear apart the adversary, whether that is fair or not; then compare the state that follows (sometimes very soon, by the action of the guardian Angel) afterwards, calmness, meekness and goodness of your own character or that of the person you were observing, with the previous, totally opposite state, and you will say to yourself: 'No, this does not seem to be the same person that shortly before that was so enraged and furious, this is rather someone from whom the demons were cast out.'" He doesn't have even a shadow of the previous rage and irrationality. Some deny the existence of evil spirits: to them, such phenomena from peoples' lives should clearly testify about their existence. If every phenomenon has a corresponding cause, and a tree is known by its fruits, then who wouldn't see in the enraged man an evil spirit, acting inside him, who cannot manifest itself in any other way but in such very fitting manner, which very often doesn't correspond at all to the natural character of the raging person, as well as to his subsequent actions.

He who wouldn't see in the outpouring of human rage an action of the ruler and the creator of evil, belongs to those who have ears, but don't hear, or who have a mind, but don't understand… Any person, subservient to irritation and breathing with rage, clearly feels in his chest a presence of an adversarial evil force, which compels him to act as if against his will, contrary to the reason and to his natural desire.

Thus, the influence of evil spirits on people is indisputable and extends, according to the words of the Savior, to the fact that a demon inhabits a sinner as his own house; and not only he inhabits himself, but also brings in even more malicious spirits.[209] Now let's imagine: what is it that a master cannot do to his house? He can do anything that he wants; likewise, the devil acts toward the sinful soul. How great is the dependence of a sinner on the devil, it is attested by the Savior in yet another passage: "You," He said to the unrepentant Jews, "are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do."[210] The comparison here is very strong. As a son receives his being from his father, so does a sinner receives his spiritual being from the devil, who brings up his son in evil. Apostle Paul depicts vividly the dependence of sinners on the devil. He likens sinners to those who had been taken captive by the devil to do his will, and commands the believers to pray for such men that God may grant them repentance, so that they may know the

truth and that they may come to their senses and escape the snares of the devil.[211] Just like a trapped bird, which is entirely in the hands of the bird catcher, a sinner is in the hands of the devil. But whereas the bird feels its confinement and thrashes against the nets to break them, the sinner doesn't notice his captivity, and thus doesn't try to free himself from it.

But are there any possessed in our times, such as those that the Lord healed during his earthly life? To this question, St. John of Kronstadt answers this: "The possessed existed before, and they still do now; except now, in the new grace, they act in a more concealed and surreptitious manner than they did in the old days, when their power and authority weren't yet triumphantly crushed, and they had much more freedom in the world. However, even today the possessed are very numerous. Who of us doesn't know the kind of possession brought about by excessive drinking… there is also another kind of the possessed: people who are malicious, irritable, angry… there is also the possession of misers… there is also the possession of carnal passions, as well as many other kinds of the possessed. But I also saw those who were really possessed, those, which were allowed, due to mysterious judgements of God, to be inhabited by demons, who caused in them terrible mental disturbance, and they pronounced terrible blasphemies and curses; I saw how they (demons) were throwing one afflicted person from one corner to another, compelled him to climb onto a wall, and so on."[212]

That which writes St. John of Kronstadt, I observed as well for almost 18 years (from March 26, 1880), during my readings of intercessory prayers over the afflicted by evil spirits before the icon of Theotokos of Kazan in Symon monastery. The afflicted persons in such cases make noises, throw themselves on the floor, grab my clothing, and so on.

◆ ◆ ◆

V – THE ATTITUDE OF GOD TOWARD FALLEN SPIRITS

The attitude of God – our Provider toward fallen angels, according to the view of ancient saints of the Church, is the same as the attitude of sunlight toward those who willfully departed from its life-giving action and doomed themselves through this act to darkness and loss of meaningful life.[213] Immediately after their fall, if they wanted to, the evil spirits could have repented and turned to the Source of Life, and one could reasonably think that they were given time to repent;[214] but pride and deliberate obstinacy have thwarted them to do so, and therefore they keep falling away from God further and further, increasingly sinking down into the realm of darkness, where there is no repentance. Having paved the way to his domination in the world through sin and death, the devil has spread his authority over all people, elevating the evil and the depraved, and persecuting those who are good and pious.

But the Lord, while allowing all that because of His decision not to violate freedom of any intelligent creature endowed with free will,[215] has limited and still limits the malicious actions of the spirit of evil in the world, turning them to the good of people. Even in the paradise, the Lord said to the ancestors who sinned, that the Seed of the woman shall crush the head of the snake.[216] According to the word of the Apostle, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”[217] For that He took upon Himself our flesh and blood, so “that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”[218] Thus the old prophesies have been fulfilled: “God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen by Angels, preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, received up in glory.”[219] The ancient curse has been lifted from us by the Cross of the Son of God, sin was destroyed by the Sinless God-man, and death was trampled upon by the death of Christ. “O death, where is your sting? O hell, where is your victory?”[220] The authority over the world is taken away from the prince of the world, and the devil is banished by the One who said: “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.”[221]

Thus, apparently, with the advent of the Son of God to the world, the

evil activity of the devil and his angels should have ceased. However, the Scriptures and the history of the Church testify that the influence of evil demons on people continues even until these days, – and the saints and teachers of the Church advise Christians with “girded waists” and “spiritual weapons” to fight the aerial spirits of evil in the high places. It is as if the facts of evil activities of the devil contradict the words of Jesus Christ the Savior, that the prince of this world will be cast out; but this is only an appearance. Here is how St. Innocent of Kherson reasons about the dominion of the devil in this world: “The devil, who did not keep his proper domain in the highest realms of the Creation,[222] fell into the abyss of disgrace and calamities and then, not wanting through repentance to return to his natural place and original dignity, conceived an idea to maliciously depose the rightful master of the earth – the ancestor of all men, and having achieved that by means of seduction, has taken his unlawful place as the prince of the world. Foreseeing in Jesus Christ the future destroyer of his dark kingdom from the very beginning of His ministry, he did not hesitate to appear before Him with temptations in the wilderness[223] at the time of His fasting. Having not achieved anything with his craftiness, he then tried to impede His ministry wherever he could; disturbed peace in the hearts of his disciples,[224] took possession of one of them to such a degree, that turned him from an Apostle to a vessel of perdition, and aroused Sanhedrin to persecute the Son of God with the very Name of God of Israel. In all these cases, the Providence and Wisdom of God have apparently allowed the enemy of God and men to act as he wanted and was able to. The Son of Man, from His side, also did not resist him by means of His divinity, and only fought him with humility and His commitment to the will of His Father; despite all that, the kingdom of light, through its inner strength, was everywhere clearly overcoming the kingdom of darkness. The small flock, to whom the kingdom was promised, grew and attracted followers from everywhere. The Son of Man has done everything necessary for establishment of His Church, so that the gates of hell would not prevail over her; it only remained for Him to be elevated on the cross, to offer Himself as an offering for the mankind, so that later, as the Son of Man, to receive authority over the heavens and the earth, and become the Mediator between God and men. After that, the prince of the world, that ancient impostor, shall be cast out, that is, out of this world of his present kingdom. The expression ‘cast out’ points to the total destruction of his authority by the power of Jesus Christ and at that, *only in its essence, but*

not necessarily in its effects. Communion with Jesus Christ delivers the believers from the authority of the devil, but this is only fully achievable with perfect faith; and since the perfection is not achievable for everybody, then the authority of the devil in the world still remains over those who are imperfect *to the degree of their imperfection*, as well as over the unbelievers." Thus, the possibility to be free from the authority of the devil and to be in communion with Jesus Christ is granted only to believers. This possibility is implemented according to the measure of moral self-improvement of a man. That's why while the victory of Jesus Christ over the prince of the world has factually happened, there is also Church militant, in its temporal and gradual development in the world, which will remain until the Great Judgment. But the places in the New Testament which talk about the continuing power and activity in the world of the prince of the world, do not contradict the words of Jesus Christ that the prince of the world will be cast out.[225] In the place of this fallen prince will reign Christ, and will receive the kingdom of the whole world also according to His human nature (and by His divine nature He has always been the King), when He shall ascend from the earth and enter into His glory. This thought is expressed in His words: "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself."[226]

The resolution of the question, therefore, consists in the following. Before the coming of Jesus Christ on the earth, all people, except a very small number of those, who believed in the coming Messiah, were under a complete authority of the devil. The Savior, who redeemed the people, deprived the devil from the unjust rights which have been given to him by the people, who had become transgressors of the commandment of God. The visible kingdom of the devil is destroyed, the paganism with its crude vices fell; the invisible kingdom was also shaken: now there are means to negate all intrigues of the devil. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."[227] The vast authority of Satan has been shaken. Because of the redemptive action of Jesus Christ, we can overcome the devil with ease. His influence is weakened on those who crucify themselves with Christ with their passions and desires. "The coming of Jesus Christ is terrible for demons, and salvific for us," says St. Basil the Great, "for his crafty torments have been overthrown, and the places on the face of the earth have been cleansed by the salvific suffering of the One who reconciled all that is in heavens and on the earth.[228] The Angels proclaim: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward

men,”[229] and the people rejoicing over the entry of the Lord to Jerusalem exclaim: “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!”[230] We can joyously proceed forth, so that to always enjoy the tree of life, which was denied to us by cunningness of the snake, because God “placed Cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.”[231] And having completed this journey without stumbling, we will enter into the joy of communion with the Lord Jesus Christ.”[232]

It was impossible that our mental and spiritual nature, having willfully sinned and undergone the condemnation of death, would by itself regain freedom, as says the Apostle: “The law was weak through the flesh”[233] For this very reason, the Son of God Himself came to *restore the nature of man within His own nature,* from the new beginning and through a miraculous birth. “The devil is dethroned by Christ,” says St. Gregory Theologian.

The power of the demon, however, wasn’t unconditionally destroyed: the unbelievers, as well as those believers who don’t keep the commandments of Jesus Christ in their daily lives, are not free from the authority of the devil. St. Gregory the Theologian says: “Christ did not exterminate him (the devil) through a single movement of His will, by which He had created the world, and could destroy him as well… but left the enemy free and allowed him to be at the same time between the good people and the evil ones, and raised between them a great battle, so that the enemy even here would undergo a terrible humiliation, fighting those who are much weaker than him, and so that those who fight for virtues would always have their glory, sanctifying themselves like gold in a furnace.”[234]

Thus, God in His great wisdom, showed the way by which a man could inseparably be with Him, and so that the devil would no longer have place in the man. But even after this, God doesn’t compel the man to salvation, but provides to all the opportunity either to fight the devil, or to make an alliance with him.

Some people don’t find it possible to admit the influence of evil spirits on people after the redemptive action of Jesus Christ, and cite those places in epistles of Apostles Peter and Jude, where it is said that the fallen angels are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”[235]

If, they say, evil spirits are deprived of freedom and are kept in chains of

darkness, then they can no longer harm people, like a chained dog deprived of ability to bite people.

But these words of the Apostles cannot be understood in the sense that the fallen spirits cannot harm people. The Apostles say that evil spirits are under darkness. The question is, what the Scriptures mean by “darkness.” It seems that by “darkness” they mean a deplorable state before the coming of Jesus Christ, as it can be seen from the book of the prophet Isaiah, who calls the miserable state of the world before the coming of Jesus Christ “walking in darkness, and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death,”[236] and by the same token, the tortures that the wicked will experience in eternity are called “blackness of darkness forever.”[237]

Thus, it is clear, that the words of Apostles Peter and Jude simply denote miserable state of demons. Undoubtedly, the demons are bound with chains after Jesus Christ came into the world; they are bound by God’s restraints, which was limiting and still limits their activity, not allowing them to tempt people more than they can bear.[238] Evil spirits are bound by virtuous life of Christians, their faith, prayer, calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ; they are always banished by the power of the Cross of the Lord. If a Christian doesn’t use that power, if he doesn’t have faith and attentive prayer, then the devil is able to harm such a person. For even a chained dog can bite, if a person carelessly comes close enough to its cage.

Let us turn now to the most convincing proof of the fact that evil spirits are able to influence people even after the crucifixion of Jesus Christ the Savior. This proof is the story of the two most prominent temptations in the history of mankind: the temptation of the Lord in the wilderness and the temptation of our ancestors in paradise. These temptations are unique in the sense that in both cases the devil was tempting innocent and sinless persons. Let us look closer at the history of those temptations. Our ancestors were blessed. Their bodies were strong and perfectly healthy; their souls were pure and innocent, full of fresh and active powers, and they enjoyed perfectly undisturbed peace of conscience. With all that, the nature with all its kingdoms: animal, plant and fossil, was in complete obedience to man. It was subservient to him, as to its king and master, and being beautiful as a whole and in its parts, with its beauties provided him most lofty pleasures. As their dwelling place, our forefathers had the paradise of sweetness, the very best place on earth, filled with all kinds of plants, pleasant to the sight and good for food,[239] and comprising everything that could satisfy the needs of aware

and intelligent creatures, develop and sustain in them the feeling of perfect happiness. The main source of that happiness for our first ancestors was that God Himself would come down and talk to them, just like Father who talks to his favorite children, would guide them with exceeding love and tenderness, would surround them with everything that might help to increase their happiness.

And then the devil envied our first ancestors in their unlimited blessedness and desired to destroy it, and indeed, succeeded in this. The snake – devil, with slander against God had seduced Eve, and through the fruit of the tree, which contained the knowledge of good and evil, has led the mankind to death – and it is not in vain that he's called "a murderer from the beginning."[240] St. John Chrysostom says: "Seeing that man is in greatest honor and almost equal to Angels, as the blessed David says: 'You have made him a little lower than the Angels'[241] – thus seeing on the earth an earthly Angel, the demon, who himself formerly was among the heavenly forces, but through his corruption and boundless pride had fallen from that height, employs a great deception, in order to deprive the man of the blessings of God, making the man ungrateful, rob him of all the goods, gifted to him by the kindness of God. And what does he do? He finds a snake, who exceeded all beasts with its intelligence, which was testified by Moses in the following words: 'The serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God has made.'[242] Using the serpent as tool, the devil engages through him in conversation with the woman and seduces that simple and infirm vessel with his deceptive words. Conversing with the serpent, Eve was saying that God not only forbade to eat of the fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, but event to touch it; and the woman said to the serpent: 'We may eat the fruits of the trees of the garden; but the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said: you shall not eat it, nor shell you touch it, lest you die.'[243] These words revealed the mystery of her spiritual state, noted by the tempter: only the fear of death kept her in obedience to God. Therefore, the serpent answers to the woman: 'You will not surely die'[244] The fear of death dispelled, the devil now with ease attracts Eve to his side: he tells a lie and slanders God: 'For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'[245] Eve doesn't contradict the devil: she trusts him, and therefore does not protest. Having heard that God as if from envy forbade to

eat of the fruit from the tree, and having puffed up herself with hopes to become equal to God, Eve has thought highly of herself: ‘And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise’[246] ‘The lust of the flesh’[247] has raised its voice in her: the tree appeared good for food; ‘the lust of the eyes’ has raised its voice as well: the tree appeared pleasant to the eyes; ‘the pride of life’ did likewise: the tree was the one that gave knowledge. But the calamity proceeded not from the tree, but from the human will, from carelessness and lack of attention, which they displayed toward the commandment”[248] “The tree in paradise was there because there was a need for a commandment to test our obedience.”[249] The guilt was not on the tree, but on us, in our disobedience; Eve herself “took of its fruit and ate; She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.”[250] This way sin entered the mankind. “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”[251] The first consequence of the sin in our first ancestors was not a cognition of some kind of an illness – spiritual or bodily, but of their nakedness. With cognition of their nakedness, appeared also the sense of inner shame. Before the fall, Adam and Eve “were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed,”[252] and after the fall they made themselves coverings, and when they hear the voice of the Lord, walking in the garden, they hide behind trees. The Lord calls Adam, and he answers: “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid; and I hid myself.”[253] And the Lord asked: “who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”[254] By this God desires to incite repentance in Adam. But the first created man instead of a sincere confession of his sin and repentance, piles up his guilt upon God: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate.” The woman likewise piles her guilt upon the serpent.[255] Thus, the first people not only committed sin, but they also persisted in it. Disobedience and unrepentance have aroused against the first people, and through them against the whole mankind, the righteous wrath of God. The judgment of the Lord, paired with punishment, was accepted by the first ancestors silently and wordlessly, as their awoken conscience notified them that after their transgression of the commandment of God their destiny cannot remain the same, and that the sin and transgression must be punished, and that a forbearing acceptance of this

punishment is the best way to receive mercy and regain love of God.[256]

The punishment declared by God to the seducer – serpent, made them aware that they are not abandoned as helpless victims to the evil and hostile power, which overthrew them from the heights of their innocence and godliness. Despite all the calamities that befell them, they still retained the ability to arise from their fallen state, oppose their enemy, fight against him and defeat him, receiving for this purpose the power and weapons from God, who at this point became not only their Judge, but also their Avenger.

Let us not be so unreasonable as to be resentful toward our first ancestor – Eve, remembering that we ourselves also keep repeating her sin – disobedience toward commandments of God; instead, let us see how we can better conduct ourselves when we are faced with temptations, so that we can evade the snares of the enemy, and for this, let's leave the garden of Eden and go to the desert of Jordan, because that which was lost by us in the paradise, was again regained for us in that place of sorrow and tears, shed for us by the Son of God. The temptation of the Savior was allowed by God not for His own sake, but as an example of a steadfast struggle against temptations, so that people would know how to defeat the enemy. St. Athanasios the Great says: "It was clear that not sinning was a natural thing, therefore the appearance of a slave, in which the Word of God was manifested, reveals the sinlessness, destroying the law of sin and taking captive the torturer, as says the prophet: 'You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive.'"[257] The Word, having opposed the enemy with the appearance of a slave, defeats the enemy through him whom he (the enemy) had formerly defeated, that is, the slave-like humility of Jesus Christ before God defeated the enemy, and therefore Jesus Christ says: "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."[258]

St. John Cassian writes: "The Savior, having the incorruptible image of God and His likeness, had to also be tempted with the same passions with which Adam had been tempted in his innocent state – that is, with gluttony, vainglory and pride. The Savior allowed the devil to approach with the temptations so that by His example He could teach us how exactly we should defeat the enemy tempter, namely, with the same methods as Jesus Christ has defeated him."[259] "Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written: For He shall give his Angels charge over you, In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against the

stone.‘”[260] “Again the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him: ‘all these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.’”[261] And what about our Savior? His only thought is about fulfilling the will of His Father and about His glory. When the tempter wants to draw His attention to remote things, He every time turns His gaze to things on high, to the Heavenly Father, and from his Luminous Face gives the answer to the enemy. To his offer about breads He answers: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”[262] To the offer of throwing Himself down He says: “You shall not tempt the Lord your God.”[263] The offer of all the kingdoms of the world Jesus Christ deflects with words: “You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only you shall serve.”[264] As long as the temptation continued, Jesus Christ was alone, but when He exposed the devil and commanded him: “Away with you, Satan!” then Angels appeared and served Him.

Along with firmness and greatness, which the Lord has shown in the temptation by the devil, He also showed a great humility: He doesn’t say anything to the devil from His own words, but takes all from the Scriptures, and that is in order to turn people away from self-confidence with which Eve started her conversation with the tempter, and to give us an example of humility, by which our adversary is most quickly defeated.[265]

Here are two identical in essence temptations and two totally different toward them attitudes of the tempted: that, which Eve didn’t say to the devil, was said to him by Jesus Christ. The former one perished herself and introduced perdition into the mankind; the latter one not only Himself is freed from the devil, but also gives the authority, power and means to be freed from the devil to all those, who decide to follow Jesus Christ on the way to salvation.

Thus, the devil was able to approach our innocent first ancestors and tempt them; through this temptation he led them to sin, curse and death. If the devil was able to approach Jesus Christ with his temptation, then we, as sinners, can never consider ourselves inapproachable to his assaults and, having before our eyes the example of Jesus, must firmly and steadfastly repel any temptation of the devil. An encouragement for us in all temptations should be the words of the Apostle that “God is faithful who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also

make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."[266] But the question why the almighty God, who could with a single move of His hand turn the devil into nothing, still allows him to influence us, is answered by St. John Chrysostom: "God doesn't disallow the devil to approach you with temptations firstly, so that you would learn that you became much stronger than the devil; secondly, so that you would remain in humility and wouldn't get puffed up with conceit due to your natural and spiritual gifts; thirdly, so that that the crafty spirit, who doubted that you escaped his authority, seeing your firm patience in temptations, would realize that you completely left him and rejected him; fourthly, that you, through all this, become tougher and stronger; and finally, that you have a clear awareness of the treasures that you possess, for the devil wouldn't approach you if he didn't see you in a certain degree of honor."

The same thought is also expressed by St. Maximus the Confessor: "There are five reasons, for which we are allowed to be assailed by demons: first is so that being fought against and fighting, we would become skillful in discerning virtue from sin; second, so that we, having achieved virtue through struggle and toil, would have it firm and permanent; third is that when progressing in virtue, we wouldn't think highly of ourselves, but learn humility; forth is that by experiencing in practice how evil and harmful sin is, we would utterly hate it; fifth and most important, that we wouldn't forget about our infirmity and the power of the One who helps us."

◆ ◆ ◆

VI – THE WAYS THAT EVIL SPIRITS INFLUENCE PEOPLE

"Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows he has a short time."[267] Hence, a whole horde of evil spirits surrounds us, watches us, observes our every move, interferes in our activities in order to inject evil at least into something, and seduce us with something. Ancient saints of the Church and spiritual warriors, experienced in spiritual life, have experienced themselves and observed variegated evil tricks of the devil, aimed at perdition of human souls. According to their opinion, the wide variance of the ways that the demons affect souls is due to the differences in the kinds of demons themselves. St. Diadochus of Photice says: "There are two kinds of evil spirits: the subtle ones, who assail the soul, and the coarse ones, who affect the body. When the grace of God doesn't dwell in a man, then the evil spirits, like snakes, nestle in the innermost depths of the heart, preventing the soul to look up to the desire of good. And when the grace of God indwells in it, then they like some dark clouds pass through parts of the body, transforming themselves into sinful passions and ghostly dreams, so that through remembrance and distraction with dreams to detach the mind from communion with the grace." The same opinion is also held by St. John Cassian: "We have to know that not all demons incite all passions in people, but a particular kind of spirits incites a particular passion, namely: some incite to indulging in impure and defiling lustful thoughts (transforming natural desires into unnatural ones), some dispose toward blasphemy, some to anger and rage, some toward depression, some induce self-gratification with vainglory and pride; and each one sows into the hearts of men that very passion with which he himself is afflicted; but they do not induce their vices all together at once, but take turns, depending on time, place and disposition of the person… This is confirmed by the fact that one generally cannot be enflamed with lust and engage in vainglorious thoughts at the same time; one cannot get puffed up with spiritual pride and along with that to indulge in gluttony (overeating); one cannot laugh stupidly and at the same time get enraged or wallow in sorrow; it is necessary for each spirit to assault the soul apart from others, so that when one departs defeated, then another, a stronger one, takes his place to assault the soul, and if he succeeds, then later leaves

his place to yet another one to seduce the person in a different way."[268]

A relevant question here would be: can demons take possession of our soul against her will? Here is what answers to that St. Cyril of Jerusalem: "The soul is free, and the devil, even though is able to incite, he does not have the authority to force the soul do something against her will."[269] "The unclean spirits," says St. John Cassian, "penetrate into the bodies of those possessed by them *only by means of first possessing their minds and thoughts.* Having stripped their minds from the vestments of fear of God, remembrance of God, the evil spirits then assault them, as those who had been disarmed and deprived of God's help and God's protection, and thus they are conveniently defeated by demons, who finally establish their dwellings in them as if in their own possessions."[270] From these words it is evident that in order to possess our soul, the devil must first take possession of our mind. The way this happens is described by St. Nilus of Sora: "The thought of vainglory is the most complicated; it embraces almost the whole universe and, like a cunning traitor of a beautiful city, opens up the gates of the soul to all demons"[271] And indeed, only look with pleasure and self-satisfaction at your own virtues as if they are the fruits of your labor and powers, and you will see how quickly all evil will rush into your soul. Out of self-satisfaction is born judgement of the neighbor and envy of him, and from that there is only one step to the desire to actively harm him, that is, it is easy to become a child of the devil, who is directing all his activity at perdition of men.

Thus, the indwelling of evil spirit in a man has its own degrees. The words of Gospel "Satan entered Judas"[272] should not be understood in the sense that Judas literally became possessed, but only in the sense that the evil spirit moved Judas to betrayal of his Teacher. Perhaps, he tried to do it many times before, but only in this particular case he was successful. St. Luke combines those degrees of indwelling of Satan in a single satanic action before the departure of the traitor to the members of the Sanhedrin, so that to establish a definite time of the betrayal of Christ. And St. John the Theologian separates these degrees and shows the graduality of the indwelling. He says: "Through the money-loving passion Satan entered into the soul of the disciple,"[273] "then took a more full possession of his heart,"[274] "and then, finally, decisively entered into him."[275]

The main trait of demonic warfare is adaptation. With unusual

deviousness and craftiness the devil meets our desires and aspirations, even those that are good and innocent, so that he can turn them into his tool, directing them to the evil side. Here is how St. Gregory the Theologian puts it: “The devil searches and seeks out everywhere where to overthrow, or to wound, and finds anything that is unprotected and vulnerable to a blow; the more purity he sees, the more he tries to defile it… The devil is insatiable, lays claim over everything, seduces even with the good and finishes with craftiness.[276] The evil spirit puts upon himself a dual disguise, casting one or the other net: he’s either a deepest darkness (obvious evil) or, if he’s uncovered, immediately turns into an angel of light (disguises himself with good) and seduces other minds with a meek smile, which is why one needs a great care so that not to meet death instead of light. Even bad people can avoid depraved life, because an open depravity is hatful to anybody, but I praise the one who exposes the crafty and invisible enemy.”[277] And in another place the same saint says: “The evil enemy has devised thousands of lethal stings for infirm mortals, and often under a credible disguise conceals a miserable ruin, in order to ensnare the one who opposes him; he prepares a deadly end to people, just like a fishing rod brings death to fishes in the water.”[278] St. John Cassian talks about the ways that evil spirits influence people as follows: “An evil spirit can enter into a communion with human soul and mysteriously influence her, putting inside her that, which is desirable to him… The possessed, when they are overtaken by evil spirits, say and do things that they don’t want, or sometimes are forced to say that which they don’t know. It is known that people don’t suffer from evil spirits in the same manner, for some are overtaken so much that they are not even aware of what they are doing or saying, and some are fully conscious and remember all that. Such an influence of an evil spirit doesn’t mean that it actually penetrates the very essence of the soul and, as if being clothed with it, is saying words and phrases with the mouth of the sufferer. This is not so, but the influence is produced not through some lessening of the soul, but through weakening of the person, when in the members, in which the strength of the soul is contained, the evil spirit produces oppression, puts over them an excessive, unbearable burden, covers the mental abilities of the soul with thickest darkness and muffles the feelings… To protect a righteous man so that the devil wouldn’t try to inflict upon him all the above by taking over his flesh, the Lord has forbidden him, saying: ‘Behold, he’s in your hand, but spare his life,’ that is, don’t make him insane, by weakening the dwelling

place of the soul and taking possession of his mind, or damaging the organ of the mind, by which he (Job) must be able to resist you; don't suppress with your heaviness his ability to reason and the wisdom of the one who opposes you."[279] The devil cannot take a complete possession of us by any means; and if he takes a strong possession of some, then it is only because of their own volition, as they had not resisted him.[280] Only those who do not resist the influence of the spirits of evil, fall under the authority of the devil, and in such cases we have no-one to blame but ourselves, for we voluntarily succumb to temptations and to sin: "For by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage."[281]

Evil spirits incessantly wage war against us, in diverse ways, with incredible craftiness and cunningness. The main thing that is observed during this warfare is its graduality, so that the approach of evil should remain imperceptible to us; starting from small things, evil spirits transition to great influence on us. Various way of the warfare that the devil wages against those who follow the narrow path, is well described by St. Isaac Syrian. He says: "Our adversary the devil has a custom regarding those who enter into warfare with him (we are not even talking about those who don't desire salvation, but give themselves up into his hands and his authority)… to craftily diversify his fight; he uses against them different weapons and adjusts to the intention of the person by nimbly changing his tactics. On those, who are lazy in their volition and infirm in their thoughts, to those he pays a particular attention and from the very beginning attacks them violently, puts out against them hard and strong temptations, so that in the very beginning of their way they are exposed to everything that he's got, so that at the very start of the warfare they would be overtaken by fear, and the way would appear to them too hard and impassable, and that they would say to themselves: 'If the beginning of the way is so hard and difficult, then who can endure this until the end?' And from that very moment they can no longer get up again and go on, or even see anything else… And the devil doesn't keep this violent attack against them for too long in order to thus put them to flight (from the way to the Kingdom of Heavens)." That's the first way of demonic warfare.

"With those who are courageous and strong, think nothing of death and go out to the fight with great zeal, he acts differently. He doesn't immediately go out to meet them, restrains himself… doesn't dare to even touch them, until their zeal cools down."[282] This is the second way of demonic warfare.

"When the devil sees that the person's senses are not captivated by

external things, his thoughts are not weakened by his flatteries and seductions, then this deceiver desires to blind the person's mind and incite in him thoughts of pride, so that he would think of himself that his strength depends on his own power, and that he himself has acquired this treasure, and by his own might has protected himself from the adversary and murderer. Sometimes the enemy, under the guise of God's revelations, shows in dreams something to the person, and also when he's awake, transforms himself into a luminous angel, and does everything so that little by little to convince the person, and to at least somewhat bring him in agreement with himself."[283] In that consists the third way of demonic warfare, which he employs against the strong and the courageous.

The fourth warfare is the most relentless. It consists in the following: "the mind of the spiritual warrior is often blinded by continual approach of sensual things… The devil attempts to make them see in their mind everything[284] in illusory images, and strives to form in them, under the guise of truth, deceitful dreams, – so that they would come to desire that which they were dreaming about, incites them to dwell in their thoughts on terrible things… In their dreams he shows them woman's beauty in indecent ways, attracting their attention either with details of clothing, or loose conduct, or bodily nakedness. By this, or something similar, the enemy has defeated some for real, and others, because of their carelessness toward inner thoughts, were deceived by these imaginary dreams, came to depths of despair, and abandoned the spiritual warfare altogether. Also, the enemy would often make them see, in a dreamlike fashion, gold, precious things, and sometimes would show them all that in reality, hoping that perhaps he could succeed in preventing them with all these things (from spiritual warfare), and entrap them in one of his nets and snares."[285]

St. Anthony the Great teaches about the spiritual warfare against demons the following: "We have terrible and crafty enemies nearby, evil demons. When the demons see a Christian that he's diligent and progresses in virtue, they try to put temptations on his path, inciting evil thoughts… And when they cannot seduce the heart with obviously unclean thoughts, then they attack again, striving to frighten with dreamlike images, appearing in images of women, beasts, reptiles, giants, multitudes of soldiers, and so on. But even in this case one should not become frightened, because these ghosts in themselves are powerless and soon disappear, especially when someone, with complete faith in God, puts on himself the Sign of the Cross. However,

because of their impudence and shamelessness, even after this defeat the demons don't cease their hostile activities. But if they are defeated in this, they attack in a different way: they take appearances of clairvoyants and predict things that are about to occur in near future. Sometimes they appear very tall, so that those who could not be seduced by thoughts would come to fear them because of their appearance. If they find that even in this case the soul is protected by faith and hope in God, then they bring with themselves their prince, who manifests himself in terrifying apparitions in order to shake the spiritual warrior's faith in God's providence, and chase him away from the salvific place where he's serving God. But we should not be afraid of those apparitions generated by the enemy, or pay attention to his deceiving words, because the devil always lies, and never says anything true. The light visible in them is not a true light. Instantaneously they appear, and likewise instantaneously disappear, not harming any of the believers. But these are not all types of craftiness and subterfuges of the devil; evil spirits also take on other appearances. Sometimes, being invisible, they appear as if singing psalms; at times, they remind verses from the Scriptures… sometimes, putting on themselves the guise of a monk they present themselves as pious interlocutors, so that deceiving by means of their appearance they could have their way with the person and incline his disposition to whatever they want… No, one shouldn't listen to demons even when they are telling the truth, for the Lord Himself, hearing the demons who were telling the truth (for they were doing so when they were saying 'You are the Christ, the Son of God') commanded them to be silent, so that along with the truth they wouldn't also sow lies."[286]

If demons can take appearances of Angels of light, then how can we recognize the presence of evil angels versus good Angels? This question is answered also by St. Anthony the Great: "The appearance of holy Angels is non-disturbing. They appear silently and meekly; which is why the soul immediately experiences spiritual joy, delight and audacity… The coming and appearance of evil spirits is often very disturbing, with noises, voices and cries, like an attack of thieves. From this, the soul comes to angst, confusion, and fear of death… therefore when you see someone who just appeared and you come to fear, yet this fear is immediately taken away and in its place your soul starts to feel inexpressible spiritual joy, then don't lose your hope and pray; but if someone's appearance is accompanied by confusion, external noise, outwardly splendor, then know that this is an apparition of evil

spirits."[287]

Thus, according to the testimony of the saints of the Church, the ways and means of the devil's temptations are extremely diverse. And the question as to why we don't always notice the assaults of the devil, is answered by St. Innocent of Kherson: "In order to feel a touch of a spirit of evil, one himself must be full of light, and sinner is darkness. On a clean clothing, even a small stain is clearly visible, but on a black clothing, even the largest and darkest spots remain unnoticed. In a pure and enlightened soul, even one dark thought, induced by the devil, immediately causes confusion, heaviness and heartfelt pain; and in the soul of a sinner, even its presence is imperceptible. Such imperceptibility is promoted by the spirit of evil himself with all available means: for of what advantage is it for him to be noticed? Or to be felt directly? That would cause his victims to run away from him. So, by dominating the sinner, he tries to keep him in delusion that he apparently acts by himself and is completely free in everything."[288]

To the question of how and with what exactly it is possible to seduce this or that person, answers St. Isidore of Pelusium: "The devil doesn't know what exactly we have in our mind or in our thoughts, because that is an exclusive domain of the power of God, but he is still able to guess person's thoughts by observing his bodily movements. Did he see that someone is intently looking at and feasting one's eyes on another person's beauty? Taking advantage of this disposition, he immediately incites this person to fornication. Did he notice someone is prone to anger and irritability? Immediately he turns his sword against him and incites him to murder. Did he perceive that someone is avaricious ? Then he incites him to robbery and acquisition of ill-gotten gains. Did he see someone indulging in gluttony? Immediately he shows to him the passions engendered by gluttony, and delivers everything serving to the fulfillment of that intention. Why doesn't he incite the same passions in everyone equally? Because one person likes one kind of things, and another person – another. So, by observing one's visible bodily passions the devil guesses the weaknesses of the soul and thus constructs appropriate custom snares."[289] By means of induced thoughts, evil spirits inject into subordinate to them people everything that is evil and adverse to God. The induced thoughts make people transition from one sin to another: from envy to enmity, from insensibility to bitterness and so on, so that finally they harden in evil so much that they feel aversion to anything that is good, despise everything that is holy, dare to mock their own soul and

conscience, faith in God and the Creator Himself. The final end of such a union with evil spirits is usually either a premature death or a suicide."

St. Makarios the Great says: "It sometimes happens that Satan has a conversation with you in your heart. Look, he says, how much evil you have done in your life, how much you have burdened yourself with sins, surely you cannot be saved. This he tells you in order to put you in a state of despair, because your repentance is extremely unpleasant to him. In your mind answer to him like that: 'I have testimony in the Lord's Scriptures: I don't want the death of a sinner, – says God.'"[290] While being in despair, not everyone would remember God's mercy to a repentant sinner, therefore it happens that people in such a state take their own life, and thereby give their spiritual being over to Satan for eternal slavery. Evil spirits can influence not only the soul, but also the body. St. Nilus of Sinai says: "When the envious demon fails to move the mind and memory, he acts upon the blood and juices, so that by these means to affect the imagination and fill it with unclean images."

With the snare of carnal pleasures the devil imperceptibly draws us toward evil, combatting us by means of our own bodily members. St. Diadochus says: "Evil spirits attack the bodily senses and are as if nestled inside them, conveniently acting through the accessible to them flesh upon those, who are still spiritual babies. The bodily senses are thus easily drawn to hedonistic inclinations." This also explains why actions of evil spirits sometimes resemble natural bodily illness. Thus, from the Gospels we know that the woman that had been bent over, had a spirit of infirmity, and about that very woman Jesus Christ said that Satan had bound her for 18 years.[291] She was not possessed by demons in an overt way, but her illness proceeded from an action of an unclean spirit. St. Basil the Great says: "Just like one shouldn't completely avoid medical assistance, it is not wise to put all hopes in it alone."[292] Many a time I had a chance to witness, while reading prayers of exorcism, various actions of spirits on people. It is not correct to say, as do some sceptics, that such people are feigning illness; firstly, among those afflicted, there are many children, and suspecting them in just pretending to be ill would be quite unreasonable, and secondly, a normal healthy persons wouldn't even think of doing with themselves that which do those afflicted people, i.e., strike themselves, throw themselves to the floor, tear apart their clothing and become completely naked, curse and, most importantly: to say something that they could not have possibly known, but which upon

verification turns out to be correct. A normal healthy person will not blaspheme sacred things, will not fear the holy Mysteries, and will not cry out that they burn. A careful observation of those afflicted persons and their actions is the best testimony that the reason for their sufferings is the action of the spirit of evil upon them. Those who are surprised by the fact that the possessed persons are most often turn out to be from peasants, should note that people from higher strata of the society in their afflictions usually turn not to God, but to doctors, and are diagnosed by them as hysterical, and not as demonized.

VII – HISTORICAL EXAMPLES OF EVIL SPIRITS AND OF THEIR INFLUENCE ON PEOPLE

Blessed Augustin in “Prayerful sighs of a soul to God” wrote “To the feet of Your glory, O Eternal Judge, I bring a complaint against my eternal enemy: condemn him and save me. Cunning and crafty is this enemy, for not only in carnal things, which are conveniently recognized, and not only in vices, but even in spiritual endeavors he conceals subtle nets, the very vices he cloaks in a veil of virtue and transforms himself into an angel of light.”[293] The validity of the above words of this teacher of the Church is confirmed by the holy people, who with their lives pleased God, and whose life stories are known to us through ancient Christian texts called *Lives of Saints*, which comprise an indelible part of the Christian tradition. Here we will give some examples of those temptations suffered by ancient saints, as well as contemporary people, from the devil.

I. One night, St. Pachomius the Great and blessed Theodor, walking in their skete, both saw a demon in the appearance of a beautiful woman, surrounded by a multitude of servants. Pachomius started to pray to God. And the demon in a woman’s form, approaching him, said: “Why you are toiling in vain, for you cannot do anything, as I received from God the authority to tempt whenever I want.” Then St. Pachomius asked the demon: “Who are you, where are you coming from, and who do you want to tempt.” The fake woman answered: “I am the power of the devil, and all the hordes of demons serve me; I removed Judas from the rank of Apostles and have authority against you also, Pachomius.” St. Pachomius asked: “Is it me alone that you came to tempt, ye power of the devil, or also others?” – “Both you and all those like you,” – answered the demon.[294]
II. It was revealed to saint bishop Nephon how demons, walking (invisibly) among people, incite them to various sins: judgement, slander, cursing and cause various afflictions. So, once Nephon saw a man, who was doing his work, and was suddenly

approached by a demon, who started to whisper something to his ear; nearby, there was another man, also doing his work, and the demon has whispered something to his ear as well, and now both of them, having left their work, started to quarrel. The saint got up and said: “O deception of the devil, that’s how you sow enmity between people!” At another time, the saint was assailed by a vainglorious demon, who was saying: “From that time you will work miracles, and your name will be glorious across the whole earth, for you have pleased God.” The saint said to the demon: “Wait, I’m going to work a miracle for you.” Seeing before himself a stone, the saint said: “I tell you, stone, go away from here and carry yourself over to another place,” but the stone remained unmoved. Then the saint said to the demon: “Here is your gift,” and spat on the demon in his face. Then he prayed to God, and the demon disappeared. The saint also saw another person, followed by a demon, who was putting in him blasphemous thoughts. The saint said to the deceiving spirit: “Desist, ye devil, to aggravate servants of God. What benefit is it for you if his soul goes into perdition?” The demon answered: “We have no benefit from that, but we have this order from our king and princes, that we wage war against people; and if the princes find us not doing this, then they beat us up without mercy.”[295]

III. Once a demon came to the cell of St. Makarios of Alexandria and told him: “Get up, abba Makarios, and let’s go to the church for the divine service.” But Makarios, being filled with the grace of God, understood the temptation of the devil, and answered to him: “O ye liar and hater of all that is good. What kind of participation in the divine service may be with you, and what can you have in common with the assembly of saints?” The devil told him: “Don’t you know, Makarios, that there is no divine service where we wouldn’t be present, and no monastic assembly without us; go therefore and you will see our works.” The elder said: “May God forbid you,” and asked God to reveal to him, if indeed that, which the devil said to him, was correct. When came the time of the nightly divine service, he came to the church. And lo, all around the church, he sees as if small children in the guise of Ethiops,[296]

who were quickly walking around the church or flying around. In that monastery there was a custom that one brother would read, and others would sit and listen; and near each of the brothers were sitting those Ethiops and were mocking them. Some they would touch with their fingers on the eyes, and those would immediately start to catnap; before others they would walk in the guise of women and before others would do something else. And whatever they acted out before someone, that very thing he would also imagine in himself. But from some, as soon as they would start doing something, they were chased off as if by some force and were removed, and could no longer stand before them, or even to pass by. But there were some, who were infirm and inattentive in prayer, whom they would mock and sit upon their neck and shoulders. The saint Makarios, seeing this, sighed from the bottom of his heart and said: “Look up, O Lord, and do not remain silent; arise O God, that Thy enemies be scattered, and flee from Thy face, for our soul is full of their mockery.” After the end of the divine service St. Makarios, summoning each brother one by one, asked them what they were thinking during the service, and each one would reveal his thoughts. It turned out, that each one was thinking precisely that which was presented to him by demons.[297]

IV. Saint Mark, sitting by a road, saw a demon in the guise of a man, carrying a lot of vessels, which were hanging all around him, and who was apparently headed to a nearby monastery. Stopping the demon, the saint asked him: “Where are you going?” – “I go to pay a visit to brethren,” was the answer. “And what are the vessels that you are carrying on you?” asked the saint. “Ah, those are various edible treats for the monks.” – “Why do you have so many of them with you?” asked Mark. “That’s so that if one doesn’t like one treat, to let him try another. If one my evil advice or influence is rejected, I will offer another, a worse one, and thus will entrap someone,” said the demon and continued on his way. The saint stayed to await his return. Seeing him again coming back he asked: “So how did you do?” – “Not well,” answered the demon, “Almost none of the monks listened to me, and only one obeyed.” “What was his name?” – “Therapont,” answered the demon and disappeared. Mark went to the monastery where he indeed learned

that Therapont was possessed by the spirit of carnal passion.

V. One spiritual warrior, named Valent, living for a long time in a desert, would for a long time wear down his flesh, and was considered a great spiritual warrior, but then, seduced by the spirit of arrogance and pride, fell into extreme conceit and became a plaything of demons. Having become puffed up with pernicious passion of arrogance, in his delusion he finally started to imagine that there are angels all around him, serving him and conversing with him. The devil, being certain that Valent is completely deceived, takes upon himself the guise of the Savior, and comes to him at night, surrounded by an assembly of demons in the guises of angels with lit oil lamps. And there appeared a fiery circle, and in the midst of it, Valent sees as if the Savior. One of the demons, in the guise of an Angel, comes up to him and says: “You have pleased Christ with your spiritual warfare, and he came to visit you. Thus, don’t do anything else, but stand to the side, and when you see him standing in the middle of the whole assembly, worship him and then go to your cell.” Valent came out, and seeing the multitude of spirits with lit oil lamps, fell down and worshipped the false christ. Deceived, he went as far as coming the next day to the church and saying to all the brethren: “I have no need in communion, for I have seen Christ.” Then those around him, seeing that he was out of his mind, bound him with chains, and within one year have cured him, destroying his pride with their prayers.[298]

VI. Under the guise of Christ, the devil once temped St. Isaac of Pechora,[299] who was staying for seven years in seclusion, not seeing anyone. And once, at the beginning of a night, when he was greatly fatigued from singing psalms, put out the candle and was sitting in his place, he saw in his cave an unusual light. Then, there appeared two demons in the guise of youths, who said: “We are angels, and here comes to you Christ.” Isaac didn’t guard himself from the dangerous desire to see Christ with physical eyes, and didn’t defeat it with a humble prayer. Without making a Sign of the Cross over himself, he worshipped the demon who appeared before him in the guise of Christ. As soon as this happened, the demons cried out with joy: “Isaac is ours!” They started to dance

around him, and on the following day he was found unconscious, after which for several years he was in severe spiritual and bodily weakness.

VII. In the guise of Christ came the devil also to St. Pachomius and said: “Rejoice, o elder, who have pleased me so much. I am Christ, and I came to you as to my friend.” St. Pachomius was astounded, and looking at the apparition, he started to reason: “Jesus Christ’s coming to a person is accompanied with spiritual joy, the heart doesn’t feel any fear, all thoughts disappear, the mind becomes like the eyes of Seraphim and is entirely enthralled with the contemplation of the glory of the Lord; and now I am confused and afraid… no, this is not Christ.” Then, having put on himself the Sign of the Cross, he said with boldness: “Depart from me, ye spirit of evil. May the craftiness of your endeavors be cursed.“ And immediately the apparition disappeared, and the place was filled with infernal stench.

VIII. “Here is what once happened to me,” says St. Theodosius of Pechora. “I was standing in my cell in prayer and singing the usual psalms. Suddenly, there appeared in front of me a black dog, so I could no longer bow down. And as he was standing before me for a long time and obstructed my prayer, I wanted to hit him, but he became invisible. Then I was overtaken by fear and trembling, and wanted to flee from that place. But the Lord helped me… The fear left me, and I no longer was afraid of anything that would appear before my eyes.”

IX. One young monk, who lived in a monastery, desired to live in seclusion as a hermit, and obtained permission from the abbot to move to a remote location of the desert. There he found a cave and lived in it, sustaining himself with date fruits. He lived there for six years, not seeing a single person; but then there came to him the devil in the guise of a worldly man, and started to look him over, from head to feet. The monk asked him: “Why are you looking at me like that?” And the fake man said: “Don’t you recognize me? I am a neighbor of your father,” and he said the names of the father, mother and sister of the hermit. And then he said: “Your mother and your sister had died more than three years ago, and your father just died recently, and made you the heir of

all his inheritance; before his death, your father had asked all to find you, so that you come home, receive the inheritance and give it away to the poor for your own soul and for the soul of your father; many tried to find you, and didn't, but I, coming about my business, recognized you. Don't tarry, go and fulfill the last will of your father." The hermit said: "I should not go back into the world." But the devil, with many seductive words persuaded the hermit to leave his cell and saw him off to the city where lived his father. The monk enters his father's house, convinced that his father is no longer alive, and behold, his father himself comes out to meet him, safe and sound. At first, the father could not recognize his own son, and the son was ashamed to explain the true reason for his coming, or why exactly he left his cell, but said that the reason was the love for his father… Subsequently, he remained in the world, abandoning his monastic vows.

X. St. Nikita, bishop of Novgorod, was by his birth from Kiev, and from a young age became a monk in Pechora monastery. Aspiring to a higher level of spiritual warfare, he soon decided to become a hermit, despite all the warnings of his abbot about prematurity of such a difficult endeavor for a young monk, and indeed, in his seclusion he underwent a temptation. On advice of the devil, who had appeared to him in the guise of an angel of light, Nikita had completely stopped praying to God, engrossed himself in reading of only Old Testament books, and started to accept visitors, giving them advices and predictions about future, and through that obtained worldly fame. No-one could compete with him in the knowledge of Old Testament books. The combined prayers of all brethren in Pechora monastery have freed the unfortunate monk from the delusion of the tempter.

XI. One of the desert fathers of Thebais was telling about himself that he, as a son of pagan priest, in his childhood saw his father offering sacrifices to idols. Once, when his father came out of the temple, the son secretly entered into it and saw Satan. Satan was sitting on a throne; a multitude of demonic soldiers were present before him. There came one of demonic princes, and bowed down before him. Satan asked him: "Where are you from?" The prince answered: "I was in this and that country, instigated there a war

and great commotion, caused bloodshed and came to announce this to you." Satan asked: "In how many days have you accomplished all that?" And he answered: "In thirty days." Upon hearing that, Satan ordered to beat him with whips. Then came another one. Satan asked him: "Where are you from?" And the demon answered: "I was in the sea, aroused a great storm, sank ships, and killed a multitude of people." Satan asked: "In how many days have you accomplished all that?" The demon answered: "In twenty days." And that one too was beaten with whips for tardiness. But then there appeared a demon, saying: "I am from the desert… it's been forty years that I've been struggling with one monk, and I've just barely overcome him, causing him to fall in sin." Satan, upon hearing this, said: "You have done a great and glorious deed." Seeing and hearing all that, the priest's son told to himself: "This means that monastic rank must have great value before God." He became a Christian and then later a monk.

XII. St. Tryphon the Martyr in young age healed diseases and cast out demons. Roman emperor Gordian, from whose daughter the saint had cast out a demon, wanted to see the cast out entity with his own eyes. St. Tryphon indeed summoned the demon, and all were able to see him as a black dog with fiery eyes. St. martyr asked the demon: "Who sent you into the young girl?" The demon answered: "Our father, the chief of every evil, who sits in hell." To the question of Tryphon "Who gave you such an authority?" – the demon answered: "We do not have any authority over those who know God and believe in the only begotten Son of God; only with permission of God we inflict upon them some light temptations. But we have full authority over those who don't believe in God, walk in the desires of their flesh, and do that which is pleasing to us; and the things which please us are as follows: idolatry, blasphemy, adultery, envy, murder, pride, and so on. These people are entangled in sins like in nets; they are our friends, and will share our eternal destiny."[300]

Such stories are almost on every page of the Lives of Saints… But even those that are cited here are sufficient to give an idea of how demons entrap

souls of men through various crafty means and bring them to perdition.

We find it relevant to give here one more contemporary story exemplifying the fact that evil spirits still have strong influence on lives and destinies of people. This story belongs to priest Arcady Levashov and it was published in the journal “Directions for rural pastors” in year 1878. The story is narrated by a venerable pastor of the Church.

“In the evening of Great Saturday of year 1875 I had a visitor in my house – a tall man, all covered with flakes of wet snow… It was my acquaintance, older than me by ten years… He often used words ‘demons-devils’, and so they came to his service. The way that the demon influenced my acquaintance was truly unusual. The demon, inaudibly to anyone else, but audibly for the afflicted, clearly and distinctly talks to him. He does so with varying tones of voice: sometimes talks with a terrible threatening tone of voice, sometimes with an affectionate tone. But no matter how he talks, his words leave in the soul of my acquaintance fear and depression. Day and night the demon doesn’t leave him alone with his verbalizations, which sometimes turn into shouts. The sufferer tries to drown out the demonic voice with prayers, singing of church songs, but the demon meddles in everything and the prayers don’t bring any repose to the poor man.”

“Stalking their victim, the demons finally got to the point when they completely disturbed the mind of my acquaintance, who was then institutionalized in a mental hospital.”

“In 25 miles from the city N. there is a village called “Knyazev Skete” where Orthodox Christian people would go for confession to an experienced priest… The road there is obscure, rural… This happened during nighttime. My acquaintance wasn’t scared neither of the dark night, nor of the wild woods, and from his hospital went straight to “Knyazev Skete.” A terrible, deafening demonic shriek would accompany him: “Where are you going? Don’t go… the priest isn’t home.” It turned out that indeed, priest wasn’t home, and my acquaintance, not fulfilling his need, went back home. On the way back he met a broke colonel, with whom he was in the hospital, and who remained there after the other one escaped. They started a conversation.

“Let’s go and have a drink: there is a bar nearby,” said the colonel to my acquaintance.

“Why not, let’s do it,” answered the other.

“We went together with the colonel,” told my acquaintance, “and came to a bar; the barman stands behind the counter, and there are bottles all

behind him.”

“Give us a large bottle of vodka,” says the colonel to the barman.

The vodka was served. The colonel poured me a glass. I drank, but refused the next one.

“What’s up with you,” says the “colonel.” “As for us, we don’t drink like that. Hey barmen, give me a big cup!”

The cup was provided. The colonel poured all the remaining vodka along with the already poured glass into the cup and drank it all up in one long gulp.

“That’s how we drink!” instructed the colonel.

“Well, if it’s like that, then save me O Lord and protect me!” said I.

“As soon as I have pronounced these words: there was neither the bar, nor the barman, nor the colonel, nothing. I found myself standing on a tree stump in a forest, and I don’t know how far away from the road. Now I was terribly frightened: and in the air, there was heard a frightening ha-ha-ha… I was wandering around for a long time, trying to get on the road. I was at the end of my rope, and came close to the river to throw myself to the water, and the demon was whispering: ‘Go on, throw yourself in, you won’t drown.’”

Repeatedly making the Sign of the Cross, the wretched man continued to walk on, and not wanting to be recognized in N., he didn’t go into the city, but went vagabonding, and on his way stopped by my place.

“So, when did all these demonic hauntings started?” – asked Arcady Levashov his acquaintance and he told him that the demons took possession of him after he, while still having a wife, had an affair with one beautiful woman. His conscience started to torture him, and in order to drown its voice, he started to drink wine. Thusly the demons took possession of him, – and continually cried out: “He’s ours! He’s ours!”

“It seemed like there wasn’t a single place in the house from which those yells couldn’t be heard. On the floor, on the ceiling, on the walls, on the benches – everywhere they shrieked with different voices,” recounted the poor man… “I even saw the demons… as if it was some dark smoke, which was clinging to the floor, formed shapes, and immediately turned into something indeterminate, but visibly abominable and terrifying; this terrifying thing screeched with hellish voice: ‘You won’t escape us… Ours! Ours!’ Finally, the demons started to assail me directly saying: ‘Give up to us your soul.’”

“Kill yourself, kill yourself,” – were yelling to me the demons; – “But I

have nothing to do it with" – answered I… "Here is a sickle," they pointed out to me, "that you can gore yourself with." And here I had a thought to pray to God… but as soon as I started making prostrations, the demons grabbed me by my clothing and forcibly dragged me away from the place, where I started the prayer, and vehemently shrieked: "Don't pray. It's too late." Meanwhile, by mercy of God, I felt in myself some inner strength. I started to make the Sign of the Cross all around me, calling upon God and the guardian Angel. In the beginning, the demons laughed and mocked me, but I did not get disheartened in calling upon God's help. And only after my long struggle against the demonic power, it started as if to get removed from me. I no longer felt demonic touches on my body, the demonic voices appeared weaker and farther… and farther… and finally, they completely ceased to be heard. But it was not without threats that the demons have parted with me: from a far corner there was heard a terrifying voice, as if of Satan himself who, gnashing his teeth and as if desiring to swallow me up, wailed: "Ours, you'll be ours; just wait and see, we're going to get you." My permanent companion, the demon who was always whispering something to my ear, this time said: "That's such a pity that you did this." The misfortunate man got rid of the demons, but a terrible depression took possession of him: will God forgive him, will he receive salvation?

"It's a terrible misfortune – to fall into depression," said priest A. Levashov to his acquaintance. "This more than anything else helps demons to influence you; even without any demons this would keep you in permanent darkness, sadness and dejection; and with the influence of demons this hopelessness should totally poison all your life and turn it into a pure hell… I understand it… Understand it perhaps more than anyone else, because I myself was subject to a similar temptation. Due to certain circumstances, there was time when I came to a thought that I won't be saved in the rank of a priest – and will be lost for eternity. But some clairvoyant people, whom I, by grace of God, had a chance to meet, supported me. You went, but fell… then what, should you keep lying down?.. No, get up. It is not a wonder that you fell, but it's a wonder that you got up. Confess your sins more often: God will forgive them. Don't you think that Got has forgotten you, giving you up to the power of demons. No! God was lovingly punishing you. Now you know how it is to live in the society of demons, and now, without any doubt, you will take all precautions that after your death, in the future eternal life, God will deliver you from their company. You are suffering through a great

temptation, but if you endure it with obedience to God's will, you will receive a great reward from God…" These words of the priest had a great beneficial effect on the destitute man and, with the help of God, he managed to get rid of any demonic influence for good."[301]

These are just a few stories which can serve as great examples for the words of saints Isaac the Syrian and Anthony the Great about the ways that evil spirits influence people. The given examples present evil spirits' influence on people so vividly that it is simply ridiculous to see in them "mere personifications of passions." The demons here are not just invisible influencers who incite evil thoughts, but are indeed live evil beings who, with God's permission, can appear before people and converse with them. If all those afflicted by demons were drunkards or insane, then one might think that all those stories about demons appearing to them are but a fruit of their disturbed imagination. But this cannot be said about those who during their life were considered saints, – and through whom the grace of God was acting, even when they were still in this material body. As far as the last story about demonic influence, it was written by a priest, – a person, who speaks according to his Christian conscience, which is almost the same as being under oath, and thus doubting this story would be quite unreasonable.

◆ ◆ ◆

VIII – INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE AFTER THEIR DEATH

The influence of evil spirits on people doesn't stop with the end of their life, but also continues after death. According to the teaching of the Eastern Orthodox Church, the dying people, around the time of the soul's departure from the body, are visited by both Angels of God and tormenting spirits. Jesus Christ Himself, in the Parable of the Rich Fool, says: "But God said to him: 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you'"[302] – in Slavonic language, this is translated as "extracted with torments," that is, by evil spirits; and in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, He said: "the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom"[303] "Lazar was conducted then by Angels," reasons St. John Chrysostom. "Conversely, the soul of that one (rich man) was taken by some terrible forces, which perhaps were sent for that, for a soul doesn't depart from this life by itself, for that is impossible. If we, coming from one city to another, are in need of a guide, then so much so is a soul, newly departed from the body and about to enter the future life, will be in need of guides for that transition. Therefore, departing from the body, she fears and trembles; the awareness of sins always torments us, but especially in that hour, when we are about to be led off to otherworldly torments"[304]

And indeed, if the whole air is filled with evil spirits,[305] then a person's soul inevitably, after her departure from the body, enters their domain. St. Athanasios the Great tells the following story: "Once, St. Anthony the Great, in the ninth hour,[306] was taken up by the Spirit and set to ascend on high. The aerial demons resisted his ascent: the Angels, contradicting them, demanded to give reasons to that impediment, because Anthony had cleansed himself from sins. The demons tried to present all his sins that he committed from the time of his birth, but the Angels closed the mouths of the slanderers, saying to them that they are not allowed to count in the sins that he did from his birth, because those were already covered by the grace of Jesus Christ, but that they present sins, if any, that he committed after he became a monk. As part of their accusations, the demons pronounced many brazen lies, but as their slanders were baseless and without proof, Anthony was allowed a free passage through their domain."[307]

St. Basil the Great in one place says: “Let no-one deceive oneself with vain words, for suddenly a destruction will come upon you,[308] and will overturn you like a hurricane. A sullen angel will come, and will forcibly drag away your soul, bound in sins, often turning to the things which she leaves here, and crying voicelessly; for the tool of crying had been closed up.”

The teaching about tormenting spirits is also found in writings of St. Makarios the Great: “When a human soul comes out of the body, there occurs a certain great mystery, for if it is guilty of sins, then there come hordes of demons, evil angels and dark forces, take this soul and drag her off to their side. And no-one should marvel at that, for if even when being alive she obeyed them, gave herself over to them, and was enslaved by them, wouldn’t they have even more authority over her when she comes out of this world?”

Blessed John the Merciful, patriarch of Alexandria, reasons about the exodus of a soul from the body as follows: “When a soul comes out of the body and starts to ascend to heavens, it is met by demons and is subject to many torments… During her procession upwards, the holy Angels cannot help her, and it is only helped by repentance, good deeds and, most of all, charity. If we don’t repent in some sin here because of forgetfulness, then by charity we can avoid the violence of the demonic way stations[309].”[310] Saint Isaiah the Hermit in his 6th word says: “When a soul comes out of the body, it is accompanied by holy Angels; the dark forces come out to meet her, desiring to hold her up with something. At that time, the Angels don’t fight the enemies, but the deeds, which the soul had done, guard and protect her from sins, not allowing them to touch her. If her deeds overcome, then the Angels sing her a song of praise and bring her with joy to face God.”[311] A great saint of God Nephon, bishop of Constantia,[312] as he was once standing in prayer, he saw heavens opened and a multitude of Angels, some descending onto the earth and others ascending on high, bringing up with them human souls into heavenly abodes. He started to look attentively to that spectacle, and lo, two Angels were ascending to the heights, carrying a soul. When they approached a toll-house of fornication, the demons of that place came out and said with anger: “How dare you to carry this soul past us, when it’s ours?” The Angels answered: “On which basis do you call her yours?” The demons said: “All the way until her death she sinned, defiling herself not only with natural sins, but also with perverse ones.” The Angels answered:

“Indeed, we won’t believe neither you nor your father Satan, until we ask the guardian Angel of that soul.” Being asked, the guardian Angel said: “A lot of sins has committed that man, but when he became ill, he cried and confessed his sins to God;” then the Angels, disregarding the accusation of the demons, entered with that soul into the heavenly gates. Also, St. Nephon saw another soul which was being dragged away by demons to hell: this was a soul of a slave who, not being able to endure abuses and beatings by his master, hanged himself, having been instigated to that by the devil. The guardian Angel was walking along afar and cried bitterly, but the demons rejoiced. And again the saint saw a soul, being carried through the air by Angels and which was taken away from them on the 4th toll-house; that was the soul of a man who was given to fornication; it was then hurled into the abyss.[313]

One particularly clear evidence of the authority of evil spirits over people after their death is given by St. Cyril of Alexandria in his “Word on the Departure of the Soul:” “What fear and what trembling await you, o soul, on the day of your death. You will see terrifying, savage, cruel, unmerciful, shameless demons, resembling gloomy moors,[314] standing before you. Just looking at them is worse than any torture. The soul, upon seeing them, comes into confusion, becomes anxious, thrashes about, seeks to hide, clings to God’s Angels. The holy Angels hold the soul; passing through the air and ascending, she encounters as if toll-houses, or way stations, guarding the way from the earth to heavens. Each toll-house examines the sins which are particular to it; each passion and each sin have their own tormenters. What a fear, trembling and anxiety must feel the soul seeing all that, until she hears the verdict, liberating her. The divine forces stand face-to-face against evil spirits and present all the good thoughts, words and deeds, belonging to the soul, and she, in fear and trembling, in the midst of the quarrel about her between the Angels and the demons, awaits either her justification and liberation, or condemnation and perdition. If she had conducted her life piously and in a manner which was pleasing to God, then she’s accepted by Angels, and thus calmly proceeds to God… And if it so happens that she had lived in carelessness and fornication, then she will hear the harshest voice: “May the wicked be taken and may he not behold the majesty of the Lord.”[315] Then the holy Angels of God leave her and it is snatched up by the moors-demons. They start to beat her up without mercy and bring her down into the earth; then they hurl her into a dark and gloomy country, where there is neither light, nor life for a man, but a perpetual sickness and interminable

sorrow. There continually is heard “Alas! Alas!” There they call, but there is no helper, there they cry out, but nobody delivers. There is no way to describe the full extent of calamity to which the imprisoned souls in that place are subjected.”

The validity of the words of the saint is corroborated by the following story which belongs to the Christian tradition. In Carthage, there lived a certain soldier named Taksiot, who conducted his life in sins. An epidemic, which occurred in the city, had a positive influence on Taksiot. Fearing death, he repented and moved out to a village but, due to incitation of the devil, he had an affair with a peasant’s wife. Soon afterwards, he was bitten by a snake and died, without having a chance to repent. He was buried in a nearby monastery. After 6 hours after the burial he came back to life, but fully came to his senses only on the 4th day. Here is what he told to blessed Tarasios, bishop of Carthage: “When I was dying, I saw moors, who were present before me. Their look was terrifying: my soul, looking at them, was extremely disturbed. Then I saw two beautiful youths, in whose company I started to ascend on high. Then, we reached the demonic toll-houses, guarding the passage and holding up every soul. And I saw that the Angels held, as if in a small ark (box), all my good deeds and compared them to the evil ones. This way, we passed several toll-houses and approached the toll-house of fornication; here the evil spirits held me up and presented all the carnal deeds that I have done since my childhood. My guiding Angels said: ‘All the sins that you had committed in the city were forgiven to you by God, because you repented in them.’ But to that the demons objected: ‘But coming out of the city, in the village, you fell into sin with a peasant’s wife.’ Upon hearing that, the Angels could not find anything good that might offset that sin and departed, and then I was brought down into the inferno of hell.”[316]

The most detailed description of the circumstances that accompany every person’s demise belongs to Theodora, a disciple of St. Basil the New. That’s how she narrated it to Gregory, another disciple of the same saint: “When came the hour of my death, I saw many Ethiops,[317] who surrounded my bed. Their faces were dark like soot and tar; their eyes were like blazing coals; their appearance was as hideous as the fiery Gehenna itself. They started to riot and make noise. Some bellowed, some barked like dogs, others howled like wolves. Looking at me, gnashing their teeth, they wanted to devour me; in the meantime, they were preparing their notes and their lists, on which were written all my evil deeds, as if awaiting a judge who was

about to come. My miserable soul was in throes of a great fear and trembling. Not only I was tormented by the bitterness of death, but also the terrifying looks and terrifying rage of the Ethiops was for me as if another terrible torture. I was turning my eyes away from them so that not to see their frightening faces and not to hear their abhorrent voices, but could not get rid of them, for they were roaming about everywhere." Then, at the bed of the dying woman appeared Angels, who received her soul after her death. Suddenly, the demons in the guise of Ethiops surrounded them and started to cry out: "This soul has many sins; let it answer to us!" But the holy Angels counterposed the evil deeds with her good ones, and she was received into the heavenly mansions.[318]

The fact that the narration of Theodora wasn't just in Gregory's imagination was verified by the following circumstances. Having woken up, Gregory came to St. Basil to receive the usual blessing. St. Basil said to him: "Where were you that night?" Gregory answered: "I slept on my bed." The elder continued: "I know that with your body you slept on your bed, but with your soul you were elsewhere. Have you forgotten what God has revealed to you this night in a dream? Here, you received that which you had desired: you saw Theodora and heard a lot from her own mouth." Gregory, upon hearing this, became even more convinced that his dream wasn't just a mere imagination, but a revelation from God.

The teaching of the Church about the authority of evil spirits over people even after their death can be traced through all divine services. Desiring to plant in our hearts salvific fear of God and prepare us for a good answer before the dreadful judgement of Christ, the Church in its hymns reminds us of toll-houses. In the Canon to the Lord Jesus Christ and Holy Theotokos, which is sang on the departure of soul from the body, there are the following verses:

"When I depart from the earth, grant me to pass unhindered the prince of the air, ravisher, torturer, who stands on those terrifying ways and vainly examines words."

"Far away remove from me the prince of the world, the chief of the bitter demonic way stations."

In a prayer which is part of Akathist to Holy Theotokos we read:

"The dead are made alive by you (Theotokos), for you have given birth to the Life Incarnate; those who had been dumb speak of God's mysteries, lepers are cleansed, illnesses are cured, multitudes of aerial spirits are

defeated.”

In the “Service on the departure of soul from the body, when a person is in prolonged suffering,” we read:

“Lo, there stand a multitude of evil spirits, holding the writings of my sins, and call intently, seeking indecencies of my humble soul.”

In the Canon to the holy guardian Angel we read:

“I pray to you, my guardian Angel, be my protector and undefeatable helper, when I should pass through the tall-houses of the cruel prince of the world.”

In Octoechos there are the following prayers to Theotokos:

“In the hour of my end, O Virgin, deliver me from the demonic hand, and the judgment, and argument, and terrible torment, and bitter demonic toll-houses, and the cruel prince…”

“O Most Pure (Theotokos), in the hour of my death deliver me from demons and their torments.”

From these words, borrowed from divine services of the Church, the belief of the Eastern Orthodox Church in the existence of demonic way stations, or toll-houses, becomes evident. How disappointing this belief is for sinners! The evil spirits that the sinner had given himself over to, they do not leave him even when the tool of his sin – the body – is destroyed. They poison the last minutes of his life, prevent him from imitating the good thief who repented in a single hour;[319] Indeed, what kind of repentance would come to the person’s mind when the evil demons surround his bed, when the disturbed soul bears an acute awareness of her grave sins, pushing her to despair. Such people die with blasphemies, but to those who had defeated evil spirits while still in their material body, evil spirits won’t even come after their death.

◆ ◆ ◆

IX – ON EXTREME INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE

Apostle Paul in the epistle to Timothy writes: “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth and be turned aside to fables”[320] It is useful to remind oneself these words of the Scriptures especially in our times, when some, not trusting the God’s word and not being able to explain to themselves with natural reasoning the things of the spiritual world, threw themselves into magic and spiritualism, believing them to be as if a bridge, connecting the visible and invisible worlds. If the desires of those people, striving to uncover the secrets of the world, were always unsuccessful, then such sorceries would be considered but a quackery, and nobody would ever believe them. But in reality, we see that spiritualism has many followers, which means that phenomena from spiritual world are possible. The cause of these phenomena cannot be God – the most holy Being – therefore, they originate from demons. The Scriptures indeed consider sorceries as means of demonic temptation. Sorcerers are already mentioned in the books of Moses. On the order of Moses, Aaron cast his rod on the ground, and the rod became a snake – this was a miracle of God; the sorcerers did the same with their magic – and that, of course, was done with the help of the devil.[321] The act of conjuring up spirits is also known from ancient times, as it is evident from the biblical story of a medium woman from En Dor, who conjured for Saul the shadow of dead Samuel.[322] All such things were forbidden in the Old Testament by the Mosaic law, and its transgression was punishable by death.[323] The diabolic origin of such phenomena is clear from the fact that powers of magic were always weaker than the power of God, for otherwise there would have been a complete correspondence between them. So, Apostle Paul addressed the sorcerer Elymas with the following words: “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell upon him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him

by the hand.[324] Martyr Cyprian was telling about himself that when he was a pagan, he did sorceries. At that time, there lived in Antioch one rich and noble youth named Aglaid. He once happened to see a maiden named Justina. He became captivated by her beauty and desired to marry her. But after all his pleas and exhortations, Justina remained firm and said that she had only one bridegroom – Jesus Christ. Aglaid decided to make use of pagan magic. He asked Cyprian and promised him a lot of gold and silver if he with his magic would incline Justina to marry him. Cyprian started his sorceries, but the maiden with her diligent prayer has defeated all efforts of the devil, and Cyprian could do nothing with his sorceries. After numerous desperate attempts, Cyprian acknowledged the power of the Cross of Jesus Christ, believed in Him and was baptized.[325] St. John Cassian tells the following story from the life of St. Anthony the Great: "Two sorcerers, despising Anthony as an ignorant man, and envying that he was daily visited by crowds of people, decided to chase him out of his cell with their sorceries. In order to do this, they sent upon Anthony very evil spirits; Anthony put the Sign of the Cross upon himself and demons didn't dare to approach him. So, they returned empty-handed to those who sent them. The sorcerers then sent even stronger demons, but those too, in vain tried to make use of their evil, and came back unsuccessful. Despite that, even stronger demons were sent against the warrior of Christ, but even those could do nothing. Consequently, such assaults of the sorcerers, arranged by means of their sorcery, only proved to them that there is a great power in Christian confession of faith."[326]

Here is how Minucius Felix talks about sorcerers: "Sorcerers not only know demons, but with their help perform all their tricks, which resemble miracles; by their persuasion and influence they do their sorceries, and make others see something which doesn't really exist, or conversely, to not see something that does exist."[327] St. John Damascene writes: "Demons too make predictions, sometimes foreseeing remote events, but sometimes only making guesses, and therefore they lie a lot; one should not believe them, even though they sometimes say things correctly."[328] In our times one can hardly notice sorceries and witcheries like those that were in ancient times: now, people doubt everything and many consider sorceries but a myth, even though one must admit that in many cases it's charlatans who pass themselves for sorcerers, in order to hoodwink simpletons. But in our times

there exists yet another thing – spiritualism, a phenomenon even more dismal than sorcery, because in order to be engaged in sorceries, one must have knowledge of occult secrets, and for spiritualism it is not required. The phenomenon of spiritualism consists in movements and knocks on tables, chairs and other inanimate objects, in apparitions of shadows, ghosts, etc. These phenomena, which transpire without any preparations, cannot be ascribed to actions of some physical forces of nature, and therefore most people ascribe them to actions of dead people's souls. But this opinion certainly cannot be accepted. Indeed, can it really be that the souls of deceased people could be conjured on a whim? If Samuel could visit Saul only by a special provision of God, and reproached him for that disturbance, [329] then can we really disturb peace of the deceased just out of curiosity? According to God's word, the deceased are under the authority of God and the Father of spirits, "Who has the keys of Hades and of Death"[330] and the authority to "bring down to the grave and bring up,"[331] and the souls of the dead do not have any authority or independence of their own.[332] This fact is clearly attested by Jesus Christ in the Parable of Lazarus and a rich man.[333] Being in hell, and after Abraham refused his request, the rich man asks him to send Lazarus to his brothers to notify them of his terrible sufferings. If the rich man had the ability to appear before his brothers himself, why would he be asking Abraham? The Abraham's answer that if they didn't listen to Moses and prophets, then they wouldn't listen to a visitor from the world beyond grave either, points out to uselessness of such visits.

Thus, if it's not the souls of dead people that are actors in spiritism, then we must admit that those are actions of the devil. "To deflect people's eyes from God," writes St. Gregory of Nyssa, "the deceitful nature of demons had invented multifarious ways to peek into the future."[334] And one of these ways is spiritualism which, as a phenomenon not yet covered by science, provides a fertile soil for all kinds of deceptions and seductions of the spirit of evil. The curious mind of men, in its quest for knowledge, desires to penetrate the mysterious realm of existence. And as he formerly did to Eve, the tempter says to them: "Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil,"[335] seducing them with the knowledge that puffs up.[336] The very fact that spiritualists deny the existence of evil spirits, which they consider to be souls of evil men, shows that in spiritualism the devil tries to disguise himself. "Why did the possessed liked to live in tombs,

i.e. in funeral caves?" – asks St. John Chrysostom – "in order to sow a harmful and erroneous teaching that the souls of dead people turn into demons – something, which shouldn't even be imagined. You will say that the possessed themselves cry out: 'I am the soul of this or that person.' But that is also a ruse and a deception of the devil, for it is not a soul of the dead man that cries out, but a demon, hiding under this disguise with the purpose of seducing the hearers."[337] "It is impossible for a soul, which separated from the body, to wander around." And "he, who wants to verify the validity of the above (about the assaults and deceptions of the spirit of darkness), let him during the false prophesies or magical miracles try to say the Name of Jesus Christ, or make the Sign of the Cross, and he will immediately see that the magic miracles will cease."[338] And indeed, "prayer and making the Sign of the Cross during spiritualist seances stops apparitions and messages from spirits and thereby exposes the Satanic participation in them."

Thus, this phenomenon has been known since ancient times and exposed by saints of the Church. The modern theologians all express their opinion that spiritualism is but one of the ways that the devil used to influence people. Let us give a notable opinion of Philaret, metropolitan of Moscow, on spiritualism.

As far as spiritualism is concerned, it is indeed sad to hear that these days so many are engaged in it. Let us imagine, that a son in the house of his father, having freedom to use anything that he needs or that pleases him, is not satisfied with that and, finding a safe, access to which is not allowed to him, forges a key and unlocks it, let's say, not to steal, but only to see what's inside. Wouldn't that be disgusting? Shouldn't the son be ashamed? That is the judgment of any divination or soothsaying, including spiritualism… The spiritualists realized that the wood cannot understand questions and give corresponding answers. Therefore they asked who was it that was answering them, and many would receive as the answer various names of different dead people. Now here is the question: was it really the souls of the dead who had those names that were answering to them, or could it be that under those names might hide some unknown entities? If that indeed should be the case, then those unknown entities are liars, assuming false names. But lies cannot come from pure beings: the father of lies is the devil. Thus, the spiritualists should reflect, who they are really dealing with, and from whom they want to learn mysteries. Here one can recall the admonition of St. Anthony the Great: "If they (demons) pass themselves for prophets, no-one should believe them."

As for those who look at spiritualism as at some new, yet unknown force of nature, and based on that reasoning justify to themselves its exploration, it would be worth to note that they have not discovered anything new, but rather went back to the realm of old pagan practices. Tertullian in his 23rd chapter of "Apology for the Christians," exposing the deceptions of pagan magic and ascribing them to actions of demons, says: "Through them, both goats and tables usually perform divinations." He just doesn't explain exactly which techniques were used so that the tables would perform divinations.[339]

Thus, there could be no doubt that the actor in spiritualism is the spirit of evil. And how exactly his actions are manifested is very well exposed in an article by P. Ruskov, printed in the journal "Wanderer" in year 1885, #12. During the first spiritualist séance, at the table were Ruskov, his wife with his daughter, and an acquaintance P.; they put their hands on the table, yet at first it didn't show any signs of movement; but then, after two hours, indistinct sporadic knocks were heard, and on the question by P., if the table would answer their questions, it lifted one leg and knocked with it once. Then, to the questions such as prices of furniture, or age of participants, the table answered with astounding precision.

In the following séances, the participants became certain that the knocks on the table are produced by some unknown to them cause, and that the table makes autonomous, independent from their will movements, answers their questions and does that which it is asked to do, such as moving across the room in a certain direction, climbing on chairs, or standing on one or two legs.[340]

The spiritualist séances were performed in Ruskov's family almost daily, and during those sessions they would conjure the souls of dead children and asked them how they live. The answer was as follows: "We live in the air, but how exactly – Christ did not allow to reveal."

In 1883, Ruskov prepared for Communion during the Holy Week of the Lent and took the Communion on Thursday. Having heard in church the reading of 12 Passion Gospels, he with his wife returned home, where he found his acquaintances. One of them asked the host: "Is there anything new in spiritualist messages?" He said that no, and that because of his preparation for Communion he did not do any séances. Then the acquaintance talked about his discovery: "Now we don't need to bother the table, but take a pencil, and it will start writing anything by itself." "Can you make an

experiment?" – asked the host. "Of course," he answered. This appeared to Ruskov just like a normal writing, and not something that was caused by external cause, and he asked his acquaintance to give an answer, by means of writing, if he also could write. To this question, the pencil held by the hand of his acquaintance, wrote: "To him (Ruskov) it's not allowed; he took Communion, but in three days he will be able as well."[341]

Ruskov wanted to make an experiment himself. Here how he describes one of them, which took place in the house of M.A. "I took a pencil, which immediately started writing. It wrote as follows: "After apodosis of Pascha I will talk to you, but now the power is taken away from me"… When we went home, I had a thought: "What does that mean, written by the pencil: after apodosis of Pascha, but now the power is taken away? And before, it wrote that I could not get answers due to the fact that I had received holy Communion. Something is not right here," I thought to myself, "I need to experiment more."

When I came home, I immediately took a paper and a pencil and sat at the table. Less than one minute later, the pencil started to write: "You are pestering me again, I'm asking you…" and the pencil suddenly stopped writing, because at that very moment I started to read prayer "Let God arise…"

Having stopped reading the prayer, I asked: "Why did you stop? Why aren't you writing?" – "I was writing to you…" – started the pencil, but stopped again, as I started the same prayer.

"Why aren't you writing?" – I asked, – "or are you afraid of the prayer?"

There was no answer.

"Write, who you really are? If the prayer frightens you and prevents you from writing, then you are none other than the one who tempted God in the wilderness?"

This question also remained unanswered.

Then I said: "In the Name of God Almighty I demand: write, who are you?.."

The pencil started to incline to the paper and slowly wrote: "Yes I am the one who tempted God in the wilderness."

This unexpected discovery astounded me so much that I jumped from the table and threw off the pencil. The wife asked: "What happened?"

I told her, who was writing us with the pencil, which I immediately

picked up again and demanded to write: “Who exactly was knocking on the table, moved it and answered the questions?”

The pencil wrote: “I did, the evil spirit.”[342]

At another time, Ruskov asked the following question: “Who makes all those phenomena on the earth, which some people call spiritualist, such as: lifting of tables, appearances of hands, etc.” and after prolonged begging: “release me,” the pencil wrote: “The devil.” – “And for what reason he produces these phenomena?” – and the pencil wrote again: “To tempt people, as I spread my activity over the whole world to bring the mankind to perdition.”[343]

From all that I have experienced, – concludes Ruskov his confession, and described here in clear conscience, it is evident that spiritualist phenomena are not caused by souls of the dead, or some unknown natural force, as some insist, but by the devil, who himself during my experiments with spiritualism wrote that by assuming names of our relatives and acquaintances he ensnares us in his nets in order to destroy us.[344]

The unquestionable validity of this statement is confirmed by the fact that the prayer “Let God arise…” stopped cold the action of writing twice, and that the received Communion did not allow the evil spirit to approach me for three days.

Thus, because of (the danger of) demonic seduction, a Christian should not desire or seek any visions. It is much safer and salvific to choose the blessing of those who didn’t see but believed,[345] remembering the words of the wise son of Sirach: “Seek not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things above thy ability: but the things that God hath commanded thee, think on them always, and in many of his works be not curious. For it is not necessary for thee to see with thy eyes those things that are hid.”[346]

◆ ◆ ◆

X – THE CONDITIONS, FAVORABLE TO INFLUENCE OF EVIL SPIRITS ON PEOPLE

"Give not up thy soul to sadness, and afflict not thyself in thy own counsel. The joyfulness of the heart is the life of a man, and a never-failing treasure of holiness: and the joy of a man is length of life. Have pity on thy own soul, pleasing God, and contain thyself: gather up thy heart in his holiness: and drive away sadness far from thee. For sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it."[347] This wise admonition is very much applicable to us, who are in more or less unpleasant circumstances of life. There are people who are careless, lazy, and who are not thinking about the following day out of laziness, negligence or their unsober life. Any thought of improvement or change of their state is burdensome to them, they live day by day, neither looking back to the past, nor thinking of the future. It is not about those that talks the son of Sirach, for such a moral state of a person is not worthy of an intelligent being and can never provide him with inner peace; conversely, this state brings him to disorders, both inner and outer, which poison his life, and evil spirits in such a case don't waste time, but with their cunning tricks bring the person to insanity… The wise son of Sirach talks about the spiritual joy of people, which proceeds from complete reliance upon God, – in submitting oneself to His will, and from that submission drawing spiritual peace, in which alone consists the true and genuine comfort of man… There are people who are excessively concerned only about external improvement of their well-being and don't at all think about their soul, the spiritual side of their life, and therefore are extremely sensitive to any failures and losses in life. When faced with misfortunes, such people despair, become distrustful of their own powers and abilities and thus fall into depression or even despondency. And since temporary changes to the worse happen in peoples' lives quite often, then a temporary sadness of an excessively mistrustful person turns into a permanent state of depression. It is to such people that the wise son of Sirach says: "Give not up thy soul to sadness, and afflict not thyself in thy own counsel." Those who allow depression to completely overtake their soul should know that by this they prepare the most fertile soil for evil spirits to influence them. And conversely,

if those who feel depressed don’t allow themselves to fall into despair, don’t lose hope in God’s mercy, and earnestly pray to God to help them, they receive consolation, and in those cases when that which they are asking for in their prayers is not harmful to them, then they receive that as well. Depression, despondency and despair, most of all, open the devil free access to our heart and bring perdition upon us. For that reason, the Wise advices: “Have pity on thy own soul… and drive away sadness far from thee. For sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it.” Our second enemies, bringing us under the influence of the devil, are our sins and passions: “The wages of sin is death”[348] The original and main reasons of many illnesses in people are sins. They subject people to mental sufferings due to actions of evil spirits. A passion blinds the intellect of a person and suppresses in him the last remainder of free volition toward good; and then the poor mind, like a blind man, wanders on there, where the passion pushes it, approves only that which agrees with that passion, and rejects anything that goes against it. Then the person sees everything perversely. Light appears to him as darkness, and darkness as light, wicked appears as good, and good as wicked. For example: the Pharisees, blinded by envy, greed and vainglory, didn’t believe in the Messiah, but delivered Him to death. Blinded by carnal passion[349], Herod murdered the Forerunner of Christ; blinded by greed, or money-loving passion[350], Judas betrayed his Teacher. The devil can easily push the person, who is given to passions, into the abyss of perdition. The passions themselves drag us into hell; the only thing that remains for the devil is to open us the hellish gates. St. Simeon the New Theologian says: “Having been used to depraved life we, as it were, by nature become evil and no longer want to correct ourselves.” The passion of pride is the most dangerous of all; as St. John of the Ladder puts it, “A prideful monk won’t have need of the devil (to lead him to perdition), because he already became to himself a demon and an enemy.” Saints Barsanuphius and John say: “Defilement happens either from conceit, or from envy of the devil; about the last case one should say that if it is not assisted by our conceit and gluttony, then he cannot repeat it often: by the same token, if someone who’s building a house doesn’t find appropriate materials, he toils in vain, and so is with the devil.”[351] St. John Chrysostom says: “Let no-one think of the devil that he’s so strong that can prevent us from proceeding on the way that leads to virtue. Indeed, he tempts and seduces the careless, yet doesn’t hold up by force and doesn’t compel.”[352] St.

John of the Ladder says: “Demons attack us with full force when they see us incapable, because of our infirmity, to engage into spiritual warfare against them.” St. Maximus the Confessor says: “It is always because of my neglect that demons find occasion to assault me.”[353] Chrysostom says: “If we live immorally, we become an easy prey for the devil.”[354] The fact that evil is born in us spontaneously is attested by the Lord Himself: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts.”[355] This happens to those, who because of neglect leave natural seeds of good in themselves uncultivated, as it is said in Proverbs: “I went by the field of the lazy man, And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding; And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; Its surface was covered with nettles; Its stone wall was broken down.”[356] And the soul, emptied and abandoned from such a neglect, must by necessity produce thorns and thistles and become subject to the verdict: “I expected it to bring fourth good grapes, but it brought forth wild grapes;”[357] whereas about the same soul it was said that “I planted it with the choicest wine.”[358] Similar words are also spoken by prophet Jeremiah, who on behalf of God, says: “I had planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality. How then have you turned before Me into the degenerate plant of an alien vine?”[359] St. Maximus the Confessor says: “From the passions which lie in the soul, demons borrow pretexts to raise in us sinful thoughts. Then, fighting the mind with their help, they make it agree with sin; having defeated it at that, they push it into mental sin; and having achieved that, they lead it, as a slave, to the sinful deed itself.”[360] St. Anthony the Great says: “The devil himself admits his infirmity, and therefore, let us not get depressed, or have fear in our soul, let us not invent for ourselves reasons for fear, saying: ‘What if a demon would come and disturb me? Or would take me up and throw me down?’ or ‘What if he would assault me suddenly and throw into confusion?’ Let us never give place to such thoughts or sorrows in ourselves, as if we were going to perdition. Rather, let us always be calm and joyful as those who are being saved; let us keep in our thoughts that the Lord is always with us, and He’s the One Who cast down and made powerless all demons (instructing us to protect ourselves from their authority by His Life-giving Cross). Let us keep in mind and always think that since the Lord is with us, then our enemy can do nothing against us. For as they find us when they come to us, that’s the way they become toward us; and whichever thoughts they find in us, the same kind of delusions they present us, offering us the

temptations in those things to which we are already inclined. Therefore, if they find us fearful and confused, then they immediately make an assault, like robbers, who found an unguarded place, and whatever we think of ourselves, they produce the same, yet magnified. If they see us scared and fearful, then increase the fear with apparitions and threats, and the poor soul is tormented by that. But if they find us rejoicing in the Lord and thinking about the future blessings, keeping in mind the works of the Lord and reasoning that everything is in God's hands, and that a demon is incapable of defeating a Christian and doesn't have authority over anybody (who calls upon the Name of the Lord), then, seeing the soul strengthened by such thoughts, the demons turn back in shame. Thus, when the enemy saw Job protected with virtue, he departed from him; but made Judas his captive, having found that he was devoid of such protection. Therefore, if we want to hold the enemy in contempt, let us always reflect upon the works of the Lord. Let the soul always rejoice in good hope; and we'll see that all demonic 'games' are same as smoke, and that demons will rather run away themselves than pursue us, because they are exceedingly fearful, awaiting the fire which was prepared for them. And for your fearlessness before demons do the following. If there should be any apparition, don't fear, no matter what it might be, but before anything, ask with boldness: 'Who are you and where are you from?' And if that was an apparition of saints,[361] then they will confirm who they are, and will transform your fear into joy. And if that was a demonic apparition, it will immediately lose its power, as long as your thought is firm, for it is a sign of an indomitable spirit – at every such occasion to ask 'Who are you and where are you from?' – that's the question which was asked by Joshua and he learned who was the one who appeared before him. Likewise, the enemy could not hide from Daniel, who asked the same question."[362]

Yet another favorable condition for influence of evil spirits on people is paternal or maternal curse; by cursing their child parents give him or her over to the authority of demons. I will give two examples of this from my personal observations.

1) A girl of about seven years old was brought to my monastery. During the reading of exorcistic prayers she was vehemently screaming and thrashing about, so much so that her parents couldn't even hold her; I myself was helping them to bring the girl to the icon of Holy Theotokos. To my question, how did this abnormal condition start, the mother with tears told me

that it started from the moment when she, in a fit of anger, cursed her daughter.

2) Young woman M. was brought by her relatives to Symon monastery and they asked me to pray for her. During the exorcistic prayers, when reciting the kinds of evil spirits, as soon as I reached the words “and maternal curse,” she immediately started to get tormented: it turned out, that her illness coincided also with the curse of her mother.

It must be said that sin serves as a kind of a bridge for penetration of the devil into our soul. Lust of the flesh and lust of the eyes, nestling in our body, are enemies of our salvation; accompanied by spiritual laziness, they take possession over us and throw us into the hands of the devil.

Quite a few workers from a nearby factory, aged perhaps thirty years or more, come to me for a confession, and to my question, if they go to confession at least once a year, they say: “we haven’t yet been to a confession before.” “In that case, what right do you have to consider yourself Christians?” To this question they answer: “We are Christians, and belong to the Church” (i.e. not “schismatics”). With such notions about Christianity, without care for one’s soul, live very many people, who call themselves Orthodox Christians. Not cleansing themselves with the mystery of repentance, they get to the point when the heart and the mind become slaves to passions, and through that, they attract the devil. The souls of such people are covered as if with a mist, through which a ray of divine light can barely penetrate. They strive to quell their sleeping conscience even more, to put out the last spark of the fear of God, still kindling in their souls, perturbing their heart and bothering their conscience. Such people don’t make use of salvific mysteries of repentance and Communion, influenced in this by evil spirits. When such a person reaches an extreme degree of hardening in sins, then everything holy becomes repulsive to him, and his heart reacts negatively to anything holy; then, imperceptibly even for themselves, they deny God and everything holy. Such people should be admonished, through reading of information about evil spirits, how dangerous it is not to be aware of their influence on the mankind, not to protect oneself against them and not to fight them.

◆ ◆ ◆

XI – ON THE SPIRITUAL MEANS OF FIGHTING AGAINST EVIL SPIRITS

God, in His multifarious and unfathomable ways, arranges the salvation of each and every one, desiring that the man, created by Him, should not perish, but live for eternity. If He sees in our heart even a spark of disposition toward good, then He, by His mercy, won't let it go out, but desiring that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth, He will by all means provide assistance so that this spark will turn into a bright flame. The grace of God is close to everyone, it calls to salvation all, without exception, and desires that all should know the Truth; for He says: "Come to Me, all you who labor and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[363] We are given all means for the victory over the devil; these means are provided to us by Jesus Christ the Savior. "The sin, living in us, is cut down by the grace of Jesus Christ."[364] The Lord has disarmed Satan and his demonic hordes, taking away from them any power to destroy us by force: "Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it."[365] Only by means of sin and passions that the demons can cling to the soul, and while she is in sin, she is covered in them and as if clothed in them. That's the kind of clothing, made out of demons, that the Lord has taken off our human nature by the very fact that He granted us the new life; the common points of their contact with us were taken away from them, and conversely, we were granted powers that would repulse them. Leeches cover a live body and suck its live blood; but if the body is washed with salty brine, then the leeches immediately fall off. In a similar fashion, the Lord has made our nature salty with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and all demons must fall off it, stricken by the Divine Power and Light of Faith, in those who have loved holiness.[366] The possibility of getting rid of demons with the help of the grace of God is attested by saints of the Church. St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "You are not the only culprit of the deed; there is another one, the most evil adviser – the devil, he's the one who incites all, but cannot overcome those who don't obey to him. Therefore, close your door and remove him from yourself, and he won't harm you. If you, without aversion, accept a lustful thought, then it will put its roots inside you, will bind your mind and will drag you into the abyss of evil." St. John Chrysostom says: "If

the devil is a robber, then it is up to us not to allow him to rob."[367] St. Ephraim Syrian says: "For those who love God with all their soul, combatting the devil is like nothing, but for those who love the world it is difficult and unbearable."[368] St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "When our nature fell into sin, God did not leave us in our fall without His Providence, but for our help He assigns to each person an Angel from those who have taken incorporeal nature; but from the other side, the corrupter of nature strives to do the same by assigning some crafty and malicious demon, who would harm the person's life. Therefore, the man being between the Angel and the demon, himself makes one stronger than the other, by an act of his free will choosing his teacher out of these two. The good Angel directs the thoughts to that which is good and virtuous, which those who are progressing in spiritual life perceive as good hope; and the other shows carnal pleasures, from which there is no hope for any good. Therefore, the one who alienates himself from that, which draws toward evil, and directs his thoughts toward good, as if putting vice behind himself, and turning the face of his soul, as some kind of a mirror, to the aspiration of future blessings, so that all the images of virtue would be imprinted in it, then he is met and helped by the brother; for because of similar gifts of word and intelligence that he possesses, the Angel is, in a way, like man's brother."[369]

A strong weapon against demons is righteous life and faith in God. Evil spirits are also afraid of spiritual fasting, spiritual vigils and prayers, meekness, benevolence, charity, modesty, humility, almsgiving, mercy, and primarily faith in Jesus Christ accompanied with moral life. The Lord has not abandoned us to be in deception of the devil, when forbidding him to produce apparitions, He said: "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"[370] Therefore, again and again should be despised for that this crafty one (who dared to offer the Lord to worship him). That, which the Lord said to him, He said it for our sake, so that demons, hearing the same and similar things from us, would flee from us because of the Lord.[371] St. John Cassian says: "The enemy lays in wait in secret places like a lion in a den, concealing in us nets and snares of thoughts, impure and impious. But we too, if we are not asleep, can set up nets, snares and ambushes even greater and more dangerous for him, for prayers and psalms, spiritual vigils and humility, serving others and mercy, thanksgiving and listening to divine Scriptures – that is the ambush to

the enemy: it is the net, the pit, the scourges, the snares and the stranglehold."[372] St. Theodor Studite says: "Show yourself to be a flock of spiritual warriors of God, impregnable for him (the devil), and let him instead of boasting, complain as he formerly did to St. Makarios: 'All became evil toward me.' Have as your commander in chief the Lord Jesus Christ, and Angels as your helpers and protectors."[373] Let no-one remain without the whole armor of God, which according to the Apostle is good faith; let no-one remain without the shield, which is humility, or without the sword, which is divine prayer, or without the helmet, which is obedience, and so on.[374] The Lord, Who is strong in battles, and Who by the weapon of Cross has smashed the dominions and the powers of the prince of the world, gave us the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy.[375] "Resist the devil and he will flee from you"[376] – says Apostle James. It's only that one shouldn't weaken in the fight against the enemy, remembering the commandment of the Lord: "By your patience possess your souls"[377] For the victory over the devil we are promised an eternal reward in the Kingdom of Heavens. If the devil especially strongly assaults us, it is the first sign of his weakness, for if we were defeated by him, then he wouldn't have need to fight us. St. John of the Ladder says: "Nothing can testify so well about the defeat of the devil and demons as their vehement assault against us."[378] "The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly."[379] "If Christ ascends to heavens, then you too ascend with Him, and be among those accompanying Him or meeting Him Angels."[380]

Ancient saints and teachers of the Church point out to the following means of warfare against the devil: Faith, God's word, calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ the Savior, humility, vigilance, prayer, the Sign of the Cross. These means we can use in our warfare, and there are also some that can be used with help of clergy, such as confession and Communion, as well as prayers of exorcism.

1) *Faith* – is a spiritual shield against the invisible enemy. The devil shoots at us with different arrows, and demons "make ready their arrow on the string."[381] But when the enemy is invisible, we have a strong defense – our faith. "Take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all of the fiery darts of the wicked one."[382] The devil often throws the fiery dart of lust and carnal pleasures, but the faith, reminding the judgment and cooling down the mind, quenches this dart.[383] If we believe in God, then we

are not afraid of demons; for the Lord sends us His help.[384]

2) *God's word* – "The sword of the Spirit is the word of God."[385] Oppose him (the tempter) with the word of life, which is the bread, coming from heavens, and giving life to the world."[386] – says St. Gregory Theologian. "The destroyer will never find place in us, if we defeat him with the sword of God's word."[387] "Demons should be driven away, by example of Jesus Christ, with words of the holy Scriptures."[388]

3) *Calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ – our Savior* – "In My name they will cast out demons,"[389] said the Savior. Saints and teachers of the Church testify about the fulfillment of this promise of Jesus Christ. St. Justin the Martyr says: "We always pray God through Jesus Christ, that we be protected from demons, whom we formerly worshipped, and who are alien to veneration of God, – so that we, after committing ourselves to God through Jesus Christ, would become without any sin. For we call Him the Helper and Savior, Whose power the demons tremble, and now when we call upon the Name of Jesus Christ, crucified under Pontius Pilate, they obey us; from this it is evident that the Father gave Him such a great authority, that even the demons obey His Name and the Providence of His former suffering.[390] St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "All kings after their death, along with their life also lose their power, but Crucified Christ is worshipped by the whole universe. We announce the Crucified, who makes demons tremble; at different times, there were many of those who were crucified; but did calling upon any other of them ever cast out demons?.."[391] "Demons even until now tremble from the Name of Jesus Christ; nor is the power of this Name lessened by our sins. And as for us, how is it that we are not ashamed to insult the glorious Name of Christ and Christ Himself,[392] are not ashamed to hear how Christianity is rejected, silently, not speaking out in defense of Jesus Christ our Savior, as if being ashamed to be His sons…" "The mind cannot defeat demonic fantasy by its own power, and it shouldn't dare to do so, for our enemies, being crafty, feign being defeated, strategizing to defeat the spiritual warrior through vainglory; yet against calling on the Name of Jesus Christ they cannot stand even a minute, and won't be able to do evil against you… Our weak mind, while it is calling out to Jesus Christ against evil spirits, conveniently casts them out and with artful skill puts to flight the invisible enemy hordes; but as soon as it dares to hope only in its own powers, it falls and gets crushed."[393] St. Diadochus, bishop of Fotiki, says: "If the mind

finds itself keeping in memory the holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and makes use of that most holy and glorious Name against delusion, then the crafty tempter departs from us."[394] St. Theodor of Edessa says: "No-one of us can by our own powers evade the craftiness of the wicked one, but only by the unconquerable power of Jesus Christ."[395] St. Theodor Studite says: "Let them give thousands and tens of thousands of enemies, a Christian won't be afraid of them. By the Name of Christ he will deflect and disperse them."[396] St. Niketas Stethatos says: "Before the struggle and victory, demons often disturb the feelings of the soul and deprive it of sleep; but the soul, which is filled by the Holy Spirit with boldness and courage, sees it as nothing, and completely disregards such assaults and bitter vehemency: by a single Sign of the Cross and calling upon the Name of Jesus Christ, God destroys their phantasms and puts them to flight."[397] There is a story in Prologue about the power of calling on the Name of God. In Constantinople, there was a sorcerer, who wanted to involve a certain boy in worship of demons. In order to show him the power and majesty of the demonic prince, the sorcerer brought the boy outside of the city into an uninhabited place. Then to the deluded boy there appeared a vision of a huge city with iron gates. The sorcerer enters with the boy into the imaginary city and brings him into the temple which was in the middle of it. By the entry into the temple the boy sees many burning oil lamps, and inside, on a high throne, there was sitting someone, by his looks resembling a king, surrounded by numerous servants. This was the demonic prince, who greeted the sorcerer with joy, gave him a place hear himself, and asked him: "Why did you bring here this boy?" The sorcerer answered: "We are your servants, and he wants to be one of us as well." Satan asks the boy: "Are you my servant?" The boy exclaimed: "I am a servant of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit!" From that exclamation, Satan immediately fell from his throne, the sorcerer perished, and all the phantoms of the city and the temple suddenly disappeared.[398]

4) *Fear of God* – He, who out of love is afraid to offend his Creator and always carries in his heart a grateful memory of His blessings and mercies that have been shown to him, as well as fear to turn out to be ungrateful for them, such a person will not be afraid neither of the devil, not of men: for he doesn't fear death, having good hope for the life everlasting, which is granted by God. St. Ephraim Syrian says: "The fear of God – is a strong pillar before the face of the enemy; do not destroy this pillar, and you won't be taken

captive."[399] St. Simeon the New Theologian says: "The one who fears God is not afraid of assaults of demons."[400]

5) *Humility* – The one who is truly humble is not afraid of anyone, for no-one will dare to raise his hand against him; he's not afraid of privations or torments, because his humility makes him insensitive to stings of the enemy's persecutions; for against the wall of humility any evil will be broken. St. Simeon the New Theologian puts it this way: "What is more courageous than a contrite and humble heart, which without efforts puts to flight hordes of demons and completely disperses them?"[401] St. Abba Dorotheos says: "When St. Anthony saw all the nets of the devil spread out all over the world, he sighed and asked: 'Who can even escape them?' And God answered to him: 'Humility escapes them,' and added: 'They don't even touch it' – that is, they cannot even touch humility."[402]

6) *Spiritual vigilance* – St. Basil the Great says: "Negligence and carelessness of the soul should be corrected and deflected from oneself with more collected and strict attention of the mind, and at every minute one should engage the mind in reflecting upon that, which is beautiful (that is, that which is the Truth). When the devil enterprises to do his tricks and with great force strives to put his thoughts, as if fiery darts, into the silent and calm soul, in order to suddenly inflame it and induce in it prolonged and indelible reminders of something, which had been impressed in it by previous experiences, then one should deflect such assaults with spiritual vigilance and heightened attention, just like a warrior who with strictest carefulness and flexibility of the body deflects from himself the blows of his adversaries."[403] St. John Chrysostom says: "Yes, it is terrible, terrible, to be ensnared with intrigues of the devil; for then the soul as if gets entangled in nets; and, as an unclean animal wallowing in mud pleasures itself with it, so is the soul, giving herself over to a sinful habit, no longer feels the stench of passions; therefore, for that reason, one should watch and be vigilant, so that from the very beginning to deny the crafty demon any access to us, lest he should force and precipitate us into the abyss by having darkened our mind and blinded the eye of our soul, which then becomes no longer able to see the light of the Sun of Righteousness."[404] "If we with care manage our actions, then we will receive from the Lord a great mercy, and will evade the wiles of the devil. When the devil sees that we are vigilant and careful, then knowing that his attempts (upon us, for our seduction) will be fruitless, he departs in

shame."[405] St. Hesychius, presbyter of Jerusalem, says: "The devil, like a roaring lion, walks about with his hordes, seeking whom he may devour.[406] So let us never neglect the attention of our heart, our spiritual vigilance, the contradiction to the thoughts induced in us by the devil, and the prayer to Jesus Christ, our God; for won't find better help than that of Jesus you in your entire life."[407] St. Nilus of Sinai says: "If you want to successfully wage warfare against demons, then shut down the gates of your soul (the feelings) with secluded quietude, and incline your ear to the words of saints, so that you could learn from them to recognize the thistles of (evil) thoughts and burn them up with anger[408] and rejection."[409] St. Theodor Studite says: "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places[410] and against our adversary, the devil, who in the very beginning of the world, having crept into the paradise, seduced our forefather with an illicit partaking of the forbidden fruit and through this was the cause of his banishment to this earth from the paradise of sweetness. Since those times, from generation to generation, he persecutes the mankind, teaching it all kinds of evil. Even now he slanders us by all available means, in order to better seduce, comes in and out as a thief, ensnares the careless souls who don't pay attention to their own state. That's why we need against him great vigilance, great watchfulness, great circumspection and diligence, so that he doesn't assault as and throw us down. Knowing his stratagems and his wiles, let us arm ourselves in every possible way, let us begin to wage war against him, deflect and defeat him, not being lazy and not giving any slack neither to ourselves, nor to him, just as he himself doesn't retreat and doesn't cut us any slack, seeking our perdition. Even as he makes his assaults many times a day and fails, he still persists as someone who hasn't even started his struggle, and again assaults with even more violence, taking with him other evil spirits; and we likewise, given such vehement daily and hourly assaults against us, must never retreat or cut ourselves any slack. Even if we have already shown a lot of attention and labored effort, but even with success let us not change it (that is, despite our successes), but let us always maintain against him equal zeal, arising and resistance, so that seeing our such a strong counteraction to the enemy, God would rejoice for us, along with the holy Angels, who are helping us by His will and inspiration."[411] St. Nicephorus says: "The devil with demons, after he by means of disobedience made the

man an exile from the paradise, gained access to sway his mental powers by means of thoughts… And there isn't any way to be protected from that except by unceasing remembrance of God, as long as the remembrance of God, being imprinted in the heart by the power of the Cross, will establish the mind in steadfastness."[412] Thus, only the permanent remembrance of God and of His mercies, constant vigil of a soldier at the service of the King of Heavens, aimed at the conquest of His enemies may give the man salvation from snares of the devil and his demons and, consequently, from all human misfortunes on this earth and beyond the grave.

7) *Prayer* – Prayer is our means of communication with God: by prayer we are elevated to heavens. In prayer we draw faith, for in prayer man feels the bliss of grace, coming from God, and can no longer doubt the existence of God. With prayer man is cleansed, protected, saved. In prayer man feels his own soul; becomes aware that he's a spirit, independent of the body, capable of ascending to his very Creator and behold Him with his own eyes.[413] St. Basil the Great says: "If at the time of prayer he (the devil) starts to put in crafty dreams, the soul should not stop praying or consider all these fantasies of the crafty enemy as her own creations, but understanding that appearance of such corrupt thoughts happens in us due to tenacity of the inventor of all evil, with even greater fervor let us cling to God and implore him to dispel the crafty barrier of the improper (to the prayerful state) thoughts, so that with the intent of our soul, unhinderedly, without any delay and instantaneously, to ascend toward God; then the invasion of the wicked thoughts will not undercut our ways to prayer; and if we don't have thoughts worthy of prayerful state, because of the doggedness of the one who is fighting against us, even then we shouldn't despair and leave the warfare halfway unfinished, but persevere, until God, seeing our steadfastness, will enlighten us with grace of the Holy Spirit, which puts the slanderer to flight, fills our mind with divine light, and grants us that state, in which our thought in silence serves God with joy"[414] St. Isaac Syrian says that if man doesn't deprive himself of the help against evil, i.e., the prayer, then the Defender and Helper will never abandon him. St. Anthony attests that prayer is one of the strongest weapons against the enemy of mankind. St. Simeon the New Theologian says: "A Christian, who performs prayer as if it's some kind of a labor, and feeling as if he against his will suffers violence, compulsion and torment, let him not think that he already has freed himself from the hand of the devil, but he should know that he is mentally (in his thoughts) still held under the yoke of

the wicked tormenter."[415] Therefore, for communion with God one needs prayer which is free, uncompelled, for that is the prayer in which consists life of the soul. St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "One must pray, because the consequence of prayer is that we become close to God; and one who is close to God is far from the adversary," and again: "He, who fears assaults of the devil, let him pray, so that he's not under the authority of the devil."[416] So let us pray, for in prayer we come into communion with God and get to know Him.

8) *The Sign of the Cross* – As it is expressed in a church hymn, "Cross is the bane of demons,"[417] "chaser of demons,"[418] "when Cross is elevated, the ranks of disincarnate spirits fall down."[419] Bp. Theophan the Recluse says about the significance and power of the Cross of the Lord the following: "By the Cross the heavens are reconciled with the earth, the Spirit of grace is brought down for sanctification of all, and for granting all the authority to trample (by the power of the Cross) upon all the power of the devil; that's why the demons cannot look at the Cross; the very sight of it puts them to flight, and they flee, as if blown away by wind. The Sign of the Cross is a protection of the believers and a victorious weapon against the invisible enemies." St. John Chrysostom says: "One shouldn't just put the Sign of the Cross with fingers, but this action should be preceded by heartfelt disposition and complete faith. If you make it with such a disposition on your face, then none of the unclean spirits will dare to approach you, seeing that sword by which it had been slain, and seeing the weapon that had inflicted upon him the mortal wound. For if we cannot look without trembling at the places where criminals are executed, then imagine how demons must tremble when they see the weapon by means of which Jesus Christ has destroyed all their power and cut off the head of the serpent. Thus, imprint the Cross in your mind and embrace (mentally) the salvific sign of our souls. When the Cross is with us, demons are no longer something to be feared or something that poses danger."[420] St. Anthony the Great says: "Demons especially fear the sign of the Cross; for by the Cross the Savior has put them to shame, taking away all their power."[421] St. Ephraim Syrian says: "Never forget to protect yourself with the Cross, and you will tear up the nets, which were prepared for you by the devil; for it is written: 'In the way in which I walk they secretly set a snare for me.'[422] Always seal yourself with the sign of the Cross, and evil shall not touch your spirit."[423] St. Gregory Palamas, bishop of Thessaloniki,

says: “Worship not only the image of Christ our God, but also the image of His Cross, because it is the sign of Christ’s victory over the devil and all the hordes of the opposing forces; which is why they tremble and flee when they see it depicted.”[424] The fact that the Sign of the Cross wards off the devil was confessed to the sorcerer Cyprian by a demon, who was sent by him to overcome the maiden Justina, yet failed in this attempt. To the question of Cyprian: “Tell me, with which weapon she resists,” he answered: “We cannot look at the Sign of the Cross, but flee from it.”[425]

9) *Repentance and Communion* – St. Ephraim Syrian says: “Blessed are those who, having been ensnared into nets of the enemy, managed to tear up his fetters and escaped, fleeing from him like a fish, saved from a trap. The fish, while still in the water, if it’s caught yet breaks the net and escapes into the deep, is saved; but when it’s extracted to a dry place, then it can no longer help itself. So are we, while we are still in this life, we have the authority from God to break on ourselves the bonds of the enemy’s will and, through repentance, throw the burden of sins off ourselves, and be saved. But if we are overtaken by that terrible decree and the soul departs, and the body is committed to earth, then we are no longer able to help ourselves, just like the fish, taken out of water and put into a vessel, can no longer help itself”[426] St. John Damascene says: “It is up to us to remain in virtue, and be obedient to God, who is calling us to it, or to distance ourselves from virtue, i.e. to live in depravity and follow the devil who, not against our will, drags us to depravity. Repentance – is the return from the devil to God.”[427] Monks Callistus and Ignatius say: “St. John of Vostro, who had the authority over unclean spirits, asked the demons living in certain possessed young girls, and who were afflicting them, the following question: ‘Which things are you most afraid of in Christians?’ And they answered: ‘If you were to well preserve that, of which you partake in Communion, then no-one of us would be able to offend a Christian.’ These are the things of which our vehement enemies are afraid the most: the Cross, the Baptism and the Communion.”[428] Indeed, what could be a better proof of faith in the Savior, as the fulfillment of His promised communion with Him through Communion, and what could be greater merit than sincere repentance before God? Even we, as mere people, cannot remain angry at a person who is sincerely repenting before us in his misdeeds. Even we are always ready to forgive someone who sincerely repents; isn’t that a proof that that there is salvation in sincere repentance?..

Thus, the salvation of our soul from slavery to the devil beyond the grave is in our communion with Jesus Christ our Savior, according to the commandment, given by Him to his disciples at the Last Supper, and in sincere repentance before Him in our sins, with firm resolution not to repeat anything that has already been recognized as sin; only in that case we can prove the sincerity of the repentance. Repentance – is the expression of the fact that the sin has been recognized as such, and since the person has become aware of the sin, would he repeat it, if he indeed sincerely repented in it? And if he does, then it means that his repentance was insincere.

10) *Prayers of exorcism* – By definition of St. Gregory the Theologian, "Prayers of exorcism are prayers that cast out demons."[429] St. Justin the Martyr says: "We, who believe in the Crucified Jesus Christ, our Lord, exorcise all demons and evil spirits and hold them in our power."[430] And again: "Every demon is defeated and is subdued through exorcistic prayers by the Name of the Son of God"[431] Indeed, prayers of exorcism become a strong weapon of Christians against the devil, which I can personally attest as someone who reads them in the Symon Monastery: many of those who came to the monastery for exorcism, received healing. It often happened that many of those who were considered by doctors as hopeless, would get well. And where else to seek healing, if not in Lord's temple, where many people assemble in the name of the Lord?.. From whom to ask help, if not from the Lord, His saints, His holy Mother?.. Who, except the Lord can heal our soul, which bodily doctors can heal those human ulcers? Out of His mercy, the Lord heals the diseases which cause bodily torments, and heals them through forgiveness of sins, which had originally caused those diseases. It is true that the diseased don't always get well immediately, but this is usually because sometimes the Lord, seeing insincerity of those people, withholds the cure, thereby teaching them patience. The main reason of God's punishment is lack of our faith. That is why the unbelievers don't receive God's healing for long time, and that's because the Lord desires to test us and teach us to be faithful, giving also an example to others. St. John Chrysostom talks about this while explaining the Gospel story about the Canaanite woman:[432] "Canaanites – the people who had perverted the laws of nature in their very foundations, and who had been exiled so that they wouldn't pervert the Jews, – now show more piety than Jews themselves. They come out of the frontiers of their country and come to Christ, and the Jews persecute Christ, who Himself came to them; so, having come to Jesus, the Canaanite woman says only one

thing: ‘Have mercy on me.’ But He doesn’t answer her a single word. What does this unusual action of Christ mean? He leads the ungrateful Jews, and calls those who blaspheme Him, and doesn’t leave the tempters, but her, who herself comes to Him, asks for His prayers, and who knows neither the Law, nor the Prophets, and in the meantime displays such a piety, he doesn’t even deem worthy of an answer. Who wouldn’t get scandalized, seeing an action so incongruent with that, which had been known about Him?.. But she didn’t get scandalized. The disciples themselves were touched by the misfortune of the woman, disturbed, saddened and, being confused, didn’t dare to ask Him: ‘Have mercy upon her,’ but were only asking to send her away. Christ, however, only answered: ‘I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ The silence alone would have sufficed to push the Canaanite woman to despair, but so much more could the actual answer of Christ. Seeing her mediators (Apostles) confused as well, and hearing that her request cannot be fulfilled, one could lose all hope; the woman, however, didn’t lose it, but armed herself with commendable boldness. Before, she didn’t dare to appear before the face of the Lord, because the Apostles said: ‘She cries out after us,’ but now, when because of hopelessness, she should have already departed, she comes closer and bows down, saying: ‘Lord, help me.’ And what about Christ? He multiplies her confusion even more, saying: ‘It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs’[433] With that answer, the Lord confused her even more than with silence… He no longer calls Jews sheep, but children, and her – a dog. But the woman in His own words finds herself a protection. With humility she says in answer to Christ: ‘If I am a dog, then not an alien.’ With these words, the woman shows humble wisdom, proving her patience and her faith, despite her humiliation. ‘I know, she says, that the children are entitled to food, but even to me it is not completely forbidden, despite the fact that I am like a dog. And if I cannot have a full portion, perhaps I can partake of some little crumbs? If I can have even some very small part in the meal, then I am not completely excluded, even though I am like a dog.’ Therefore, Christ was not quick to help her, for He knew that she would say all that (and that was very desirable as an example of humility and faith). For that very reason He initially denied her request, so that her humble wisdom might be manifested: He wanted to reveal such a great virtue of the woman, and that, which He was saying to her, He was saying not to reproach her, but to call her to Himself, reveal the hidden treasure of her faith, so that with faith all would also recognize her

humility. The Lord called Jews children; the woman went further (out of her humility), and called them lords; Christ tells her ‘It is not good,’ and she agrees: ‘Yes, Lord.’ He calls her a dog, and she ascribed to herself qualities of a dog… To this, Christ exclaimed: ‘O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire,’ i.e., your faith can do more than that, but let it be to you as you desire! And her daughter was healed from that very hour.”[434] Anyone, who upon being tested, shows such a strong faith as did the Canaanite woman, will receive from the Lord that, which he is asking from Him.

◆ ◆ ◆

XII – THE QUALITIES REQUIRED FROM EXORCISTS

Seventy disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, having returned from their preaching, were saying with joy: “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name,”[435] i.e., by our command, in Your Name, they come out of those who are possessed by them. From all the spiritual entitlements, given by the Savior to Apostles, the authority to cast out demons, obviously, has particularly astonished them, as it was the most evident proof of their apostleship and the authority of their Teacher, so they announce that to the Lord with joy. The Apostles realized, felt in themselves the power to oppose the primeval enemy of mankind, were confirmed in that power, and that realization filled their hearts with joy. “Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you,” – said the Lord (in response to their joyous expression), – “but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”[436] To be written in heaven, – means to be a citizen of the Heavenly Kingdom, to dwell near the King of that Kingdom or, in other words, to receive the eternal reward in heavens. This blessing is above any conceivable earthly blessing and thus one should rejoice about it more than about any earthly thing, including even the most unusual gifts of God here on the earth. St. Anthony the Great says: “One should not brag about the power of casting out demons, or become puffed up with conceit about the gift of healing; one shouldn’t marvel at one who casts out demons, or put down another one who doesn’t. It is not up to us to do signs and wonders, but it is the work of the Savior. He said to His disciples: ‘Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.’[437] That our names are written in heaven testifies about our virtue in life; but to cast out demons is a grace granted by our Savior. Therefore, to those who at the Great Judgment will boast not with virtues, but with signs and wonders (which they performed) and say: ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’[438] the Lord will answer: ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”[439] For the Lord doesn’t know the ways of the lawless… Besides, one should pray to receive the *gift of the discernment of spirits*, so that, as it is written, to “not believe every spirit,”[440]

says St. Athanasios the Great in his works. The Lord said: “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven,”[441] i.e., not everyone who acknowledges Me as his Teacher, confessing his faith in Me as in the Lord, will enter the Kingdom of Heavens – the kingdom of Christ – even if he were, apparently, a member of earthly church organization. Who then are those, who despite their signs and miracles, are deemed unworthy of the kingdom? It is those, whose grace is but a gift of the Giver, to which they didn’t add anything of their own, for which reason they are justly condemned; because they became ungrateful and insensitive before Him, who honored them so much that gave them, who were unworthy, the gift of signs and wonders. “And though I have the gift of prophesy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”[442]

These admonitions of Jesus Christ the Savior, Apostles and saints of the Church should warn us, unworthy servants of Jesus Christ, who are reading prayers of exorcism over the possessed, from the prideful thought which is totally pernicious to us, that the act of casting out demons happens through our own spiritual strength and because of our personal piety. If someone of those who read exorcistic prayers were to imagine something like that in their mind, they would have ruined their soul for eternity and would clearly manifest that they themselves are in demonic delusion.

Conversely, anyone who reads prayers of exorcism, must be sincerely and firmly convinced in his complete and great unworthiness before God and, if he notices any benefit from reading those prayers over the afflicted, he must ascribe it solely to the grace of God, and any unsuccess – to his own unworthiness. He must strive by all means to increase in himself humility, because that’s precisely the thing that demons hate the most, and flee from it as if from fire. Casting demons out of others, he must take care that his own name be also written in heaven.

St. John Chrysostom says: “In order that the preaching of the Apostles could better predispose people to faith in the Messiah, the Savior Himself says: ‘Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.’[443] Notice, how He is concerned about their morals no less than about miracles, showing them that miracles without good morals mean nothing. Saying that ‘Freely you have received, freely give,’ – He humbles them and warns against greed. And so that they wouldn’t

think that the miracles that they work are somehow the fruit of their virtues, says ‘Freely you have received,’ that is, you don’t give anything of your own to those who receive from you; you have received these gifts not as a reward, or for some labors, but it is My grace; so give it to them; for there is no price, worthy of these gifts.”[444] With these gifts the Name of God is glorified, and the power of His Name, when it is being called upon with faith.

It is important for those who perform exorcisms over the sick to be always aware of the importance of this duty that they have taken upon themselves, and in accordance with that conduct their life. Continuous contrition over one’s own sins and true humility, that’s what should comprise the essence of exorcists’ moral state. St. John Chrysostom says: “Where are those who are seeking signs and wonders? Let them hear that the thing which is most needful is the heart, sensitive to good. And if that is missing, then signs and wonders are useless.”[445]

Exorcists must know and remember the following admonition of St. Simeon the New Theologian, who says: “The devil, as an incorporeal spirit, from the time of Adam’s transgression against God’s commandment, achieved a certain authority and boldness to act upon human nature, and became very experienced in waging warfare against people, because the people, who are defeated by him, die generation after generation, unable to properly pass on the knowledge of how to combat evil (due to their inability to come back from beyond the grave to inform later generations), and during their lives they are usually prevented from this by craftiness of the devil, who knows how to silence those warriors of God through enmity of other people, preventing people to accept and to believe that, which they preach… and sometimes, interfering when they hear or read those things… and he, the devil, is immortal, and throughout his long life has acquired a lot of experience, and for the ages of ages, he’s always – a hidden enemy of people, always weaves evil intrigues, and makes assaults against them, and especially against those who are born now, because the contemporary people not only don’t have any experience in the warfare against the devil, but don’t even have any idea about the demonic warfare or the devil’s skillfulness in it. That’s why when he overtly hits them, they don’t see it, and when he covertly shoots at them, they don’t feel it; he covers them with darkness, appearing as an angel of light. He became exceedingly skillful in his struggle with man; the end and the goal, however, for which he wages that warfare, is great and terrible: having separated and removed the mankind from God in the

beginning, he strives and exerts himself to prevent it from returning back to God, and to retain it forever in separation from Him. And if it happens for someone to be called out by Jesus Christ and return back to God, the devil, skillful and experienced in evildoing, by all available means tries to again separate him from God. For that very reason the devil became exceedingly skilled in waging warfare against people and fights them by means of five stratagems: Paganism, (Talmudic) Judaism, Heresies, immoral life and perversely understood or unendurable practices of good deeds. With Paganism he seduces those people who love so-called *external wisdom*; with Judaism he seduces the Jews, convincing them to think that they believe correctly, since they worship one God, with which he also seduces the Muslims; with Heresies he seduces *unwise* worshippers of God, separating them from Orthodoxy; the Orthodox Christians he removes from God through wicked deeds and immoral life, namely: love of money (avarice), love of pleasures (hedonism) and love of fame (vainglory); and again, with perverted good deeds and unendurable self-deprivations he seduces the spiritual warriors, whom he precipitates into pride, which is the root and beginning of every evil, as well as into addiction to fame and glory from people. With this delusion of pride, which is the exterminator of all virtues, he perverts and precipitates into the abyss the souls of misfortunate spiritual warriors, living in righteousness and truth, and some of them he convinces to show unwise zeal for God, and unendurable strictness of life. Through this, they become tyrants to themselves, and torture themselves with privations and sufferings, so that they would be praised by men; this is worthy of many tears, for through this they get deprived of both present and future blessings. That's why, by all available means, we should seek how we could avoid the intrigues of the devil. But we cannot do it by any means, unless we come to the God-man, Jesus Christ, in all humility of our soul and extreme contrition of the heart; then Jesus Christ will Himself wage war for us, and through us, and we will be calm, for it is not possible to oppose and overcome that enemy, except through Jesus Christ, and Him alone."[446]

Finally, the priest (or anyone else) who reads prayers of exorcism, should keep in mind the following two aspects:

1) Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the question of His disciples: "Why could we not cast it out?" answered: "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."[447] In other words, in order to cast out that kind of (stronger) demons, one needs a more perfect faith, which may be achieved by means of

augmented prayer and fasting, since fasting and prayer, by removing the person from all earthly things, reinforce the faith and thus bring him or her into closer communion with God. St. John Chrysostom says: “You will say, if faith is needed, why there is also need for fasting? It is because fasting with faith gives a lot of strength; it teaches man love of wisdom, makes him an Angel and also strengthens him against incorporeal forces. But fasting alone is not enough – one also needs prayer, which should precede fasting. He who fasts, gets as if spiritual wings, and prays with vigilant spirit, quenches evil lusts, propitiates God and humbles his conceited spirit. Thus, the one who prays with fasting,[448] he has two wings, lighter than the wind itself, for such person doesn’t slumber, doesn’t talk much, doesn’t get weakened in prayer, as it happens to many; but he’s quicker than fire and is above the earth, and therefore such a person is a particular enemy and spiritual warrior against demons, as there is no spiritually stronger person than the one who sincerely prays.”[449]

2) To the request of the father, about healing of his possessed son, the Lord answered: “If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes.”[450] Full of desire to see his son cured, but at the same time sensing the weakness of his faith, the poor father, in a strong movement of his contrite heart, with tears confesses to the Lord his lack of faith,[451] and by that humility, by that outburst of self-abasement, significantly elevates his faith. “I believe, Lord, and am ready to believe with all my heart, but I cannot, lack of faith plagues me, disbelief against my will penetrates my soul and weakens my faith, help me against that disbelief, cast it out of my soul, don’t count it as my sin, and I will believe in You with all my heart.” With this very awareness of his disbelief, his faith was strengthened and appeared in such a degree, that the Lord deemed it possible to reward him with the healing of his son.[452] There are two things which are necessary for healing: the faith of the healed, and the strength of the healer. Lack of one of them can make the healing impossible. Jesus Christ Himself didn’t do in Nazareth many miracles because of their unbelief.[453] Even though performance of miracles mostly depends on the miracle-working power of God, at the same time it also depends on the faith of people for whom or for whose sake the miracles are being performed. For that reason, Jesus Christ asked faith from those, who were asking Him to do the miracle of healing, and always refused to do miracles for those unbelievers who, tempting him, demanded him to

just show signs and wonders.[454] Jesus Christ, obviously, could perform miracle even in the absence of people's faith, but He didn't do this, as this would have been useless for the unbelievers and those who were scandalized. St. Gregory Theologian says: "For the healing of our inner man[455] we need: great and perfect faith and unbounded love; to a greater degree, God's assistance, and not to a lesser degree our own zeal, expressed and actually manifested through word and deed, if it is needed that our souls, which are most precious to us, be well healed, cleansed and valued more than anything else in the world."[456]

◆ ◆ ◆

CONCLUSION

Thus, the question: do evil spirits exist as beings independent, actual and personal, can they enter into people, including Christians, and torment them, – should be answered as follows: firstly, evil spirits do exist as real and personal beings; secondly, they can enter and torment people as well as Christians (with special permission of God) who are careless and don't live in accordance with the commandments of God and Jesus Christ. Those Christians, who instead of doing God's will, chose to do their own evil and rebellious will, and instead of living according to the spirit, chose to live according to the flesh, such Christians, unfortunately, might become convenient dwelling places for evil spirits. Such was Judas, such was the fornicator of Corinth, such were Hymenaeus and Alexander. But with all that, in those examples one can also perceive a certain beneficial aim, which can help understand why such actions of evil spirits might be allowed against Christians. The fornicator of Corinth was delivered to Satan so that his "spirit may be saved."[457] Hymenaeus and Alexander were delivered to Satan so that "they may learn not to blaspheme."[458] Based on these examples one could assume that even in our days the Lord allows evil spirits to enter into people with such beneficial goals in mind – a temporary punishment for sins and moral correction. And the experience shows that sometimes even highly moral people happen to be victims of evil spirits. Their misfortune they bear with humility, with patience and hope awaiting the help of Him, Who can heal all diseases and relieve torments and sufferings inflicted by evil spirits. Such people, for their virtues, receive healing. Thus is fulfilled the word of the Lord, spoken in the Revelation of St. John: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore, be zealous and repent."[459] To all Christians, all these unfortunate cases of possessions by evil spirits should serve as a reminder of necessity for greater spiritual vigilance and greater attentiveness toward their moral and spiritual life, according to the words of the Savior: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."[460]

◆ ◆ ◆

[1] Prologue, Dec 4th

[2] John 12:31

[3] Ephesians 6:12
[4] Ephesians 6:16
[5] 2 Corinthians 11:14
[6] John 8:44
[7] Luke 18:27
[8] 2 Kings 6:16
[9] Ethiops was an eponymous term for evil spirits in some ancient texts, probably due to their dark appearance.
[10] Lives of Saints, Dec. 23
[11] Ephesians 6:12
[12] Revelation 20:10
[13] Caloric, a hypothetical invisible substance, which was believed by XIX century scientists to control temperature of material bodies, is used here by the author as an example. Now of course we know that this scientific hypothesis is erroneous, and there is no such thing as "caloric," yet the "caloric argument" in the text above still holds – just substitute "caloric" with, let's say, "neutrino," or "dark energy," and the author's argument remains valid.
[14] Iliad 24, 145, 144, 159
[15] Dialogues of Plato, Timaeus
[16] Exodus 7:11
[17] Lives of Saints, Oct. 2
[18] Genesis 3:1
[19] Job 2:9-10
[20] 1 Corinthians 12:10
[21] Psalm 142:8
[22] Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:7
[23] Genesis 3:1-19
[24] John 8:44
[25] Deuteronomy 32:17
[26] Job 2:1-7
[27] 1 Chronicles 21:1
[28] Tobit 3:8
[29] 1 Kings 16:14-15
[30] 1 Kings 22:19-23
[31] Zacharia 3:1-2
[32] 1 John 3:8; cf. Matthew 12:24-29; James 2:19; 2 Corinthians 2:11
[33] John 8:44
[34] Matthew 25:41
[35] Luke 13:11-16
[36] Luke 22:31

[37] John 13:31
[38] Matthew 12:25-27; Mark 3:23-24; Luke 11:17-20
[39] Matthew 13:38-39
[40] Matthew 13:19; Mark 3:15; Luke 8:12
[41] Matthew 8:28-32; cf. Mark 5:1-13
[42] Mark 1:25,5:8-9
[43] Matt. 12:43-45; Luke 11:24-26
[44] Matt. 8:29; Luke 4:33
[45] Acts 10:38
[46] Acts 5:15
[47] Acts 26:18
[48] Hebrews 2:14
[49] Jude 1:9
[50] James 3:15
[51] Acts 19:3
[52] Revelation 12:4
[53] Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 4:5
[54] St. Irenaeus “Against heresies,” book IV
[55] Cf. Philokalia
[56] Evening Prayers
[57] Works of St. John of Kronstadt, v.2
[58] Genesis 1:1
[59] Job 38:7
[60] Cf. St. John Damascene
[61] Psalm 104:4
[62] 1 Peter 1:12, Galatians 1:8
[63] Luke 15:10
[64] 2 Samuel 14:20
[65] Mark 13:32
[66] 2 Chronicles 6:30; Isaiah 44:7
[67] Isaiah 14:13-14
[68] Isaiah 14:15
[69] Luke 7:21; Ephesians 6:11-12
[70] John 8:44
[71] Jude 6
[72] 2 Peter 2:4
[73] St. Makarios the Great
[74] Which means “slanderer”
[75] Which also means “adversary”

[76] Or, one might conjecture, an extremely dark, deficient and distorted light, because a *complete* absence of light is just nothingness and non-existence.
[77] St. John Damascene, An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, v. 2, chap. 4
[78] Genesis 1:31
[79] Wisdom of Solomon 2:24
[80] Cf. John 8:44
[81] Isaiah 14:13-14
[82] 1 Timothy 3:6
[83] Jude 6
[84] Cf. Luke 4:5-6
[85] 1 John 3:8
[86] Sirach 10:15
[87] St. Gregory the Theologian v. 3
[88] St. Basil the Great v. IV
[89] Isaiah 14:13-14
[90] 1 Timothy 3:6
[91] 1 Peter 5:5
[92] Isaiah 14:13-14
[93] St. Gregory the Theologian v. 3
[94] Matthew 8:29
[95] James 2:1
[96] 2 Peter 2:4
[97] Revelation 20:10
[98] Matthew 25:41
[99] Matthew 25:46
[100] Cf. Revelation 20:10
[101] E.g. Origen, Anabaptists
[102] St. Irenaeus of Lyon 14, 28
[103] Augustine of Hippo, The City of God 14, 27
[104] Justin the Philosopher, Dialogue with Trypho
[105] 1 Timothy 2:4-5
[106] Hebrews 2:16
[107] Jude 6
[108] Matthew 12:26
[109] Luke 11:26
[110] Luke 7:21
[111] Matthew 10:1
[112] Ephesians 6:12
[113] Deuteronomy 32:27; Luke 8:30,33,35; Revelation 9:20

[114] 1 Timothy 4:1
[115] 2 Peter 2:4
[116] Jude 6
[117] Matthew 13:39
[118] Matthew 12:26
[119] Matthew 4:3
[120] 2 Corinthians 6:15
[121] Luke 11:15
[122] Matthew 13:38; Ephesians 6:16
[123] John 14:30
[124] John 8:44
[125] John 8:44
[126] Matthew 9:34
[127] Revelation 12:9
[128] Revelation 20:2
[129] Colossians 1:13
[130] Matthew 25:41
[131] 2 Corinthians 11:15
[132] Ephesians 6:12
[133] Colossians 1:16
[134] Matthew 8:16
[135] Matthew 6:12
[136] Matthew 13:28
[137] Lives of Saints, May 15
[138] Mark 9:25
[139] Luke 11:14
[140] Lives of Saints, Oct. 21
[141] Psalm 74:19
[142] Job 39:40-41
[143] St. Ignatius Brianchaninov, Word on Death
[144] Lives of Saints, Oct. 2
[145] Matthew 12:43-45
[146] Job 1:7
[147] Acts 8:26-40
[148] 2 Corinthians 2:11; 2 Timothy 2:26
[149] James 2:19
[150] Matthew 8:29; Mark 1:24; 3:11
[151] 1 Corinthians 2:2
[152] Job 1:4

[153] 1 Kings 22:22

[154] That probably means making calculations and intelligent guesses about most likely outcomes of future events based on data analysis of current and historical information (like in modern data science), from both worlds – material as well as spiritual. Only the Holy Spirit knows the future as it will actually happen, since He's above space and time.

[155] John 8:44

[156] Revelation 12:9

[157] Ephesians 6:12

[158] Matthew 12:26; Luke 11:28

[159] In Roman times, a *legion* consisted of about 5,000 soldiers.

[160] Mark 5:9; Luke 8:30

[161] Revelation 12:4

[162] Matthew 24:1

[163] Ephesians 6:12

[164] Revelation 12:7-9

[165] I.e. airspace, or visible skies.

[166] Job 1:7; 2:2

[167] Ephesians 6:12

[168] Ephesians 2:2

[169] Word on Death

[170] Ephesians 2:2

[171] John 12:31

[172] Ephesians 6:12

[173] Matthew 6:26; Note that "heaven" here is in singular, which probably means that it refers to a particular heaven – namely, the one which is called *the air*.

[174] St. John Chrysostom, v. I

[175] St. Theophan the Recluse, "Explanations on the Epistle to Ephesians."

[176] Luke 8:29

[177] Luke 8:33

[178] Isaiah 14:15

[179] Cf. Bp. Ignatius Brianchaninov, "Word on Death" p. 179 and Revelation 20:1,7; 1:18

[180] Ephesians 2:2; 6:12

[181] 2 Corinthians 4:4

[182] Matthew 13:24-25

[183] Григорий Богослов, ч. III, стр. 25

[184] 1 Corinthians 10:20

[185] Чет. Мин., Апр. 23

[186] Oratio de incarnatione Verbi, v. I, p. 180

[187] Иоанн Златоуст, "Против Иулиана и язычников"

[188] Иоанн Златоуст, т. II, стр. 554

[189] Василий Великий, Коммент. на Исаию, т. II, стр. 165
[190] Isaiah 10:11
[191] 1 Samuel 5:2-3
[192] 1 Corinthians 10:21
[193] Василий Великий, Коммент. на Исаию, т. II, гл. 10, стр. 531-534
[194] Acts 13:10
[195] 2 Corinthians 11:14
[196] Acts 5:3
[197] 2 Corinthians 12:7
[198] 1 John 3:8
[199] 1 Timothy 5:15
[200] 2 Corinthians 4:4
[201] 2 Timothy 2:26
[202] 1 John 3:10
[203] 1 Thessalonians 2:18
[204] Минуций Феликс, кн. 3, стр. 374
[205] Прил. к Прав. Обзор., 1866 г., стр. 90-92
[206] Христ. Чт., 1826 г., ч. 23-я, стр. 180-181
[207] Luke 21:8
[208] Слово о смерти Еп. Игнатия, стр. 215-216
[209] Matthew 12:43-45
[210] John 8:44
[211] 2 Timothy 2:25-26
[212] Прот. Иоанна Сергиева (Кронштт.), т. II
[213] Августин. О граде Божьем, кн. 2, стр. 9
[214] Немезий. Догм. Богосл. Еп. Сильвестра, стр. 386
[215] Иоанн Дамаскин, т. II, стр. 4
[216] Genesis 3:15
[217] 1 John 3:8
[218] Hebrews 2:14-15
[219] 1 Timothy 3:16
[220] Hosea 13:14
[221] John 12:31
[222] Cf. Jude 1:6
[223] Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13
[224] Matthew 16:23
[225] John 12:31
[226] John 12:32
[227] James 4:7

[228] Colossians 1:16
[229] Luke 2:14
[230] Luke 19:38
[231] Genesis 3:24
[232] Иннокентий Херсонский, соч., т. 9, стр. 108-110
[233] Cf. Romans 8:3
[234] Василий Великий, ч. 4, стр. 150
[235] 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6
[236] Cf. Isaiah 9:2
[237] 2 Peter 2:17
[238] Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13
[239] Genesis 2:9
[240] John 8:44
[241] Psalm 8:5
[242] Genesis 3:1
[243] Genesis 3:2-3
[244] Genesis 3:4
[245] Genesis 3:5
[246] Genesis 3:6
[247] 1 John 2:16
[248] St. John Chrysostom
[249] St. Basil the Great
[250] Genesis 3:6
[251] Genesis 3:7
[252] Genesis 2:25
[253] Genesis 3:10
[254] Genesis 3:11
[255] Genesis 3:12
[256] Иннокентий Херсонский, соч., т. 7, стр. 79
[257] Psalm 68:18
[258] John 16:33
[259] Иоанн Кассиан, стр. 240
[260] Matthew 4:5-6
[261] Matthew 4:8-9
[262] Matthew 4:4
[263] Matthew 4:7
[264] Matthew 4:10
[265] Иннокентий Херсонский, соч., т. 1, стр. 35
[266] 1 Corinthians 10:13

[267] Revelation 12:9-12
[268] Добротолюбие, стр. 58
[269] Добротолюбие, стр. 82
[270] Иоанн Кассиан, т. II, стр. 111
[271] Хр. Чт. XXVII, 1821 г.
[272] Luke 22:3
[273] Cf. John 12:6
[274] Cf. John 13:2
[275] Cf. John 13:27
[276] Добротолюбие, т. 3, стр. 185
[277] Добротолюбие, стр. 258, 320
[278] Добротолюбие, стр. 329
[279] Добротолюбие, стр. 287-288
[280] Cf. James 4:7
[281] 2 Peter 2:19
[282] Подвижническое слово Исаака Сирина в рус. пер., слово 60, стр. 392-393
[283] Ibid. стр. 399
[284] That is, things of this world, normally perceived by senses
[285] Ibid., стр. 400-401
[286] Life of St. Anthony the Great
[287] Ibid.
[288] St. Innocent of Kherson, “On sin and its consequences”
[289] Добротолюбие, т. I, стр. 192
[290] Ibid.
[291] Luke 13:11-16
[292] Добротолюбие, т. 5, стр. 188
[293] Augustin of Hippo, Conversation of a soul with God
[294] Lives of Saints, May 15
[295] Lives of Saints, Dec. 23
[296] Meaning that they were black in appearance.
[297] Lives of Saints, Jan. 19
[298] Historia Lausiaca, Ch. 29
[299] Which means “Caves”
[300] Lives of Saints, Feb. 1
[301] «Руководство для сельских пастырей» за 1878 г., № 41. Этот рассказ перепечатан в сборнике «Народный собеседник» за 1898 г.
[302] Luke 12:12
[303] Luke 16:22
[304] Life of St. Anthony

[305] Ephesians 6:12

[306] That is, around 3:00 PM

[307] St. Athanasios the Great, To Anthony, part III

[308] Cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:3

[309] Demonic *way stations* (or *toll-houses*) is a metaphor for the spiritual reality corresponding to the points in soul's upward journey where it is confronted with its crimes or sins committed during its lifetime in the material body. There are reasons to believe that this spiritual reality is perceived by the departed soul as going through real toll-houses guarded by demonic entities.

[310] Prolog, Oct. 29

[311] Philokalia, part 1

[312] In Cyprus

[313] Lives of Saints, Dec. 23

[314] That is, pitch black in appearance

[315] Cf. Isaiah 26:10

[316] Lives of Saints, Mar. 28

[317] That is, black spiritual entities

[318] Life of St. Basil the New, Prologue, Mar. 26

[319] Luke 23:42

[320] 2 Timothy 4:3-4

[321] Exodus 7:10-12

[322] 1 Samuel 28:7-20

[323] Leviticus 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 10:10-12

[324] Acts 13:10-11

[325] Lives of Saints, month of October. St. Gregory the Theologian, part II.

[326] Letters of St. John Cassian

[327] Памятники древней Христианской письменности, прил. к Православному Обзору, 1866 г., стр. 91.

[328] St. John Damascene, book II

[329] 1 Samuel 28:21

[330] Revelation 1:18

[331] 1 Samuel 2:6

[332] Job 27:8; Luke 12:20

[333] Luke 16:19-31

[334] «Спиритизм перед судом Христианства» А. Надеждина, стр. 100

[335] Genesis 3:5

[336] 1 Corinthians 8:1-2

[337] St. John Chrysostom, On the Gospel of Matthew

[338] St. Athanasios of Alexandria

[339] «Вера и Разум», 1886 г., ч. 1

[340] Брошюра: «Из области спиритических тайнодействий». М. 1889 г., стр. 5.
[341] Там же, стр. 8-12.
[342] Там же, стр. 14-15.
[343] Там же, стр. 18-19.
[344] Там же, стр. 19.
[345] John 20:29
[346] Sirach 3:21-23
[347] Sirach 30:22-25
[348] Romans 6:23
[349] Πορνεία
[350] Φιλαργυρία
[351] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 608
[352] St. John Chrysostom, On the book of Genesis, part I
[353] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 322
[354] St. John Chrysostom, On the Gospel of Matthew, part I
[355] Matthew 15:19
[356] Proverbs 24:30-31
[357] Cf. Isaiah 5:2,4
[358] Cf. Isaiah 5:2
[359] Jeremiah 2:21
[360] Добротолюбие, т. 3, стр. 199
[361] Or of holy Angels
[362] St. Athanasios the Great
[363] Matthew 11:28
[364] Cf. Colossians 2:11-12
[365] Cf. Colossians 2:15
[366] Theophan the Recluse, On Colossians
[367] St. John Chrysostom, On Gospel of Matthew, part II
[368] Добротолюбие, т. I, стр. 343
[369] Добротолюбие, т. I, стр. 272-273
[370] Matthew 4:10
[371] Добротолюбие, т. I, стр. 238-239
[372] Добротолюбие, т. 3, стр. 97
[373] Ibid., т. 4, стр. 65
[374] Ephesians 6:11-17
[375] Luke 10:19
[376] James 4:7
[377] Luke 21:19
[378] Ladder of Divine Ascent

[379] Romans 16:20
[380] St. Gregory Theologian, part 4
[381] Psalm 11:2
[382] Ephesians 6:16
[383] St. Cyril of Jerusalem
[384] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 604
[385] Cf. Ephesians 6:17
[386] St. Gregory Theologian, v. 3
[387] Добротолюбие, т. 4, стр. 64-65
[388] Иоанн Кассиан, стр. 582-583
[389] Mark 16:17
[390] Justin the Martyr
[391] St. Cyril of Jerusalem
[392] St. Gregory the Theologian, part I
[393] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 170
[394] Ibid., т. 3, стр. 25
[395] Ibid,. стр. 362
[396] Ibid., т. 4, стр. 309
[397] Ibid., т. 2, стр. 118
[398] Prologue, Dec. 2
[399] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 487
[400] Ibid., т. 5, стр. 21
[401] St. Simeon the New Theologian
[402] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 647
[403] Ibid., т. 5, стр. 387
[404] John Chrysostom, On the book of Genesis, part I
[405] Ibid., стр. 102
[406] 1 Peter 5:8
[407] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 175
[408] I.e. anger against evil thoughts
[409] Ibid., стр. 305
[410] Ephesians 6:12
[411] Добротолюбие, т. 4, стр. 328-336
[412] Ibid., т. 5, стр. 269
[413] This is said only about true prayer, and not just recital of memorized prayerful words, when the essence of the pronounced words is not comprehended, not understood, not felt, due to thoughts, occupied with material subjects.
[414] Ibid., т. 5, стр. 387
[415] Ibid., стр. 53

[416] St. Gregory of Nyssa, part I
[417] Canon to the Cross, p. 3, tr. 2
[418] Ibid., p. 6, tr. 4
[419] Ibid.
[420] St. John Chrysostom, Talks on the Gospels, part II
[421] Добротолюбие, т. 3, стр. 236
[422] Psalm 142:3
[423] Ibid., стр. 500
[424] Ibid., т. 5, стр. 307
[425] Lives of Saints, Oct. 2
[426] Добротолюбие, т. 2, стр. 351
[427] St. John Damascene, book II
[428] Добротолюбие, т. 5, стр. 448
[429] Добротолюбие, т. 5, стр. 448
[430] Justin the Martyr
[431] Ibid.
[432] Matthew 15:21
[433] Matthew 15:26
[434] St. John Chrysostom, On the Gospel of Matthew, part II
[435] Luke 10:17
[436] Luke 10:20
[437] Ibid.
[438] Matthew 7:22
[439] Matthew 7:23
[440] 1 John 4:1
[441] Matthew 7:21
[442] 1 Corinthians 13:2
[443] Matthew 10:8
[444] St. John Chrysostom, On the Gospel of Matthew, part II
[445] Ibid.
[446] St. Simeon the New Theologian
[447] Matthew 17:21
[448] Obviously, not an unendurable one, as fasting must be undertaken with a lot of spiritual discernment, and increased very gradually.
[449] St. John Chrysostom, On the Gospel of Matthew, part II
[450] Mark 9:23
[451] Mark 9:24
[452] Еп. Михаил, толк. на Евангелие, кн. 2, стр. 116
[453] Matthew 13:58

[454] Matthew 16:1-4
[455] 1 Peter 3:4
[456] St. Gregory Theologian, part I
[457] 1 Corinthians 5:5
[458] 1 Timothy 1:20
[459] Revelation 3:19
[460] Matthew 26:41

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hegumen Mark

Hegumen Mark was a Christian exorcist and a priest of Eastern Orthodox Church in Symon Monastery (Moscow). He lived in XIX century Russian Empire.